

NEW THOUGHTS ON AN OLD BOOK

WILLIAM A. BROWN

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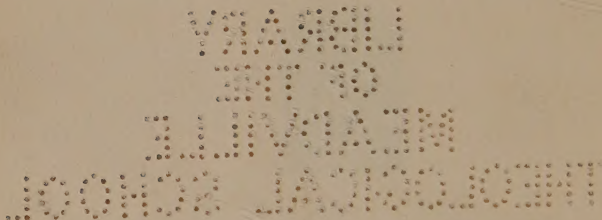
NEW THOUGHTS ON AN OLD BOOK

BY
WILLIAM A. BROWN



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CHAPTER I

WHAT IS THE GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT?

IF you were asked to name the greatest achievement of all the long Christian centuries, what would you be most likely to suggest?

These twenty Christian centuries will be ever memorable as marking man's increasing mastery over the forces of the natural world. The partial liberation of the mind of man has resulted in eras of inventions and in epochs of discoveries. And in a world of majestic wonders, who shall name the most glorious single achievement of all the Christian centuries?

The Christian centuries have been particularly the centuries of discovery. There are no longer many unknown lands. Long-shut doors are now opened into all the world. Great freedom of travel tends to make the people of the planet at home anywhere. The tides of immigration are just setting in. People from almost everywhere are following freely

the fortunes of trade and the favors of developing industries. A higher power than the concert of nations is making for the open-door policy of the whole world. And that power will eventually set an open door into all nations—a door which no man can shut.

Then these are the centuries of the innumerable inventions which to-day lighten the loads too long borne in exhausting weariness by the beings who were made in the image of the divine. The shortened hours of toil afford added hours of leisure for the studied pursuit of culture and learning, and make for the amelioration of the untoward social conditions of mankind. These lessened hours of fatiguing labor are not the least among the manifest mercies which have come into the world through the inventive genius of man's free spirit.

And yet the greatest achievement of the Christian centuries is not found in the world of art or science, nor in the realm of discovery or invention. The greatest achievement of the Christian centuries is the Bible. Of the making of

books there is no end; but among all the myriads of books there is this one book which is above every book. "Bring me the book!" the man of letters exclaimed; and the attendants asked him, "What book?" And he replied, "There is but one book!" In that saying the man of letters expressed the true judgment of mankind.

The Bible is the literature of power. A youth gone wrong found his mother's copy of the Bible opened upon a bench in the garden, and read, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof"; and this youth, wonderfully redeemed by that single, searching, convicting word of God, devoted his life to the work of the Lord, became the mightiest Christian thinker of his day, and, after the lapse of fifteen hundred years, still holds the theological thinking of the world in the grasp of his powerful hand.

The Bible is the literature of power. A German monk read the phrase, "The just shall live by faith," and, transformed by that living word of God, he found a

better way of access to the Father of us all, and through the fuller revelation of heavenly grace, this monk burst asunder the fettering bonds which bound men in slavish fashion to lifeless forms of worship, and, further, that wonder word of illumination concerning justifying faith made radiant a world which was lying in deep spiritual darkness, and ushered in a new birth of freedom for the moral and intellectual realms.

The Bible is the literature of power. An English scholar sat in a wayside chapel, listening as an untutored man laboriously read Luther's preface to the Romans; and suddenly he heard those marvelous words, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And as this English scholar heard these gracious words of Christian assurance he felt his heart grow strangely warm, and the peace of God which passes all understanding came to abide in his life; and out from that humble chapel in which an almost illiterate man was poorly reading some great passages from the living Word of

God, this school man, newly born, went into the spiritual leadership of the Church of God.

The influence of the Bible upon the abiding literature of the world is incalculable. What literary desolations would be wrought by removing from all libraries the other books whose writing has been inspired by the Bible! The mark of the Bible is seen in the legislation of the most advanced peoples in the world. In music and in art, the greatest sources of suggestive power are the challenging phrases found in the Word of God. The Bible is the book of the brotherhood of man, and the fountainhead of all true democracies. The Bible is not only the inspiration for larger liberties, but its presence and study in a nation is a guarantee of continued freedom. "The Bible is the sheet anchor of American liberties" still stands as the judgment of America's foremost warrior statesman.

A ruling monarch from a distant land had come to England. He was shown the places of historic interest in old

London. He toured rural England and later journeyed to the seats of learning as well as to the places of power. He saw the crown jewels of that realm upon whose imperial sway the sun never sets, and later he looked upon the grand fleet of that proud mistress of the seas. And then he was brought into the presence of her gracious Majesty Queen Victoria. All that the visiting ruler had seen of pomp and splendor had produced a profound impression upon his mind, and now, in the presence of the crowned head of so vast an empire, he asks the queen to tell him the secret of England's greatness. And taking a copy of the Bible in her hand, the Christian sovereign of the world's greatest empire said: "The Bible is the secret of England's greatness."

Saint Paul's Cathedral contains many monuments, but among all the memorials chiseled in stone or painted upon canvas there is no monument erected to the genius who designed the Cathedral. There is, however, an inscription; but that inscription is quite enough, for it reads: "If

you seek his monument, look around you."

There are no monuments erected to the Bible. However, there are innumerable memorials which are scattered widely over both hemispheres—memorials which have been occasioned by the Bible. Yonder monastery upon a lonely mountain in the desert lands of Arabia will be remembered forever as the place where an ancient manuscript of the New Testament was found. A library is justly famous because closely guarded within its protecting vaults is a partial copy of the first books in the Christian Scriptures. Over the seas there is a room to be known all down the ages, because a few men met for a brief time within its inclosures to work upon the translation of the ancient words of the Bible into modern speech. But there are no monuments which have been erected to the Bible itself. Like the fabled one of old, every bit this Book may have touched has become beautiful and memorable forever. And yet even more like the One of whom it speaks, the Bible has caused monu-

ments to be erected to people and to places while apparently forgetful of itself.

If you seek a monument to the Bible, look around you. A careful investigation of contemporaneous history in contrast with the world into which the apostles were sent will reveal monuments to the Bible so numerous that no man can count them. For to the earnest student of the progressive history of the Christian centuries mighty monuments to the Bible will appear in changed customs, in purified languages, in humanized legislation, in refined manners, in ennobled art, in developing sciences, in growing democracies, in shared riches, in disseminated knowledge, in multiplied freedoms, in enlarged liberties, in increasing good, in decimated evils, in renewed peoples, in uplifted races, and in the countless multitudes of redeemed souls to whom the Word of God brought life and light.

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Matt. 4. 4).

The word of God is living, and active,

and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and the intents of the heart (Heb. 4. 12).

Every scripture inspired of God *is* also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17).

Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth: but the word of the Lord abideth for ever (1 Peter 1. 22-25).

The Bible is the greatest achievement of the Christian centuries, as well as the most priceless heritage of all mankind.

And they to whom the world is indebted for this priceless literary treasure are the real benefactors of the races of men.

Who, then, are the men to whom the world owes the fact that there is such a book as the Bible?

CHAPTER II

IT WAS THEIRS: IT IS NOW OURS

It is exceedingly difficult for us to imagine a time when there was no Bible. With what pitying eyes we read, in an early history, that there was no open vision in those days. For long, lonesome centuries men saw through a glass darkly.

And it is even more difficult for us to conceive the almost incidental way in which many of the books of the Bible appear to have been written. Such fascinating stories are treasured in the traditions of the church as to the manner of the writing of some of the books in the New Testament. What a wonderful enrichment would come to our general knowledge if we could fully recover the circumstances concerning the writing of all the books in the Bible!

The two general divisions of the Bible are the Old and the New Testaments, comprising sixty-six books, with numerous authors and many centuries covered

in their writing. And yet the Bible is really one book. It is a book with one theme—the theme of redeeming love. It is a book built upon one thread—a scarlet thread, whose red strands entwine the whole revelation of the bleeding heart of God for the lost and sinning sons of men.

We speak of the Word of God as our Bible. But in what sense is this book of God our Bible?

The most casual American, in reading the Word of God, discovers quickly that the Bible is a foreign book. Its scenes are all laid in distant lands and among alien peoples. Its figures of speech are so strange that entire libraries of books are needed for their proper understanding. Its modes of thought are at variance with the accepted rules of the modern mind. Its language is so foreign that it is difficult at times to fully apprehend its deeper meaning. Its imagery reflects a world totally different from the one in which we live and move and have our being. Its customs and ceremonies are altogether outside the common range of experiences of the native-born in our race. Its chief

characters bear names with which we are not naturally familiar. Its story largely concerns an almost forgotten period in the world's history. The message of the Bible, however welcome it may be to us, comes mediated by a race other than our own. For the Bible is an Oriental book. The authors of the books of the Bible were for the most part Asiatics. The holy men of old who spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost were mostly members of the Semitic race.

And yet we may in all sincerity speak of the Word of God as our Bible. But in what sense is this book of God our Bible? Evidently, not in the sense that we discovered it ourselves, and certainly not in the sense that we wrote it ourselves. The Bible is our Bible simply because we accepted it as a most gracious gift from the people of another race. To what persons in particular are we thus in everlasting debt for this great gift of the most precious literary heritage of all the ages?

The Bible has so long been in the possession of our people that it is well-

nigh impossible to fancy a time when our race was outside the pale of revelation and without the Word of God. While the Bible had its rise among the Orientals, yet to-day its greatest triumphs are in the Occidental lands. Although the authors of the books of the Bible were mostly Asiatics, nevertheless to-day this book of the revealed will of God holds its completest sway over the minds of the American and the European. The Bible has so fully become the possession of the highly favored peoples of these evangelized lands that it is now quite inconceivable to suppose the time when our people were without the Bible altogether.

The Bible was first brought to the ancestors of our race by foreign missionaries. In recounting the modern fruits of foreign missions, it is now the quite common practice to look to lands other than our own, apparently all unmindful of the fact that the largest results of missionary labor are to be seen in all that is best in Europe and America. It was so long ago that the foreign missionaries first brought the Bible to our race

that we have almost altogether forgotten that we ourselves are the descendants of the converts of foreign missionaries. And if it had not been for the work of foreign missionaries the Bible would never have become the common possession of the people of our race.

And yet, wonderful as is the giving of the Bible to the people of our race, it is one of the least of the marvelous achievements of the foreign missionary enterprise. So far as we are concerned the bringing of the Bible to us has been of inestimable value. Even so there have been many other events of equal importance in the illustrious history of foreign missions.

The missionaries have largely mastered the languages of the peoples of the planet. At almost infinite pains these men of God have listened to the well-nigh unintelligible jargons of the various unlettered races; and then, after mastering their rude ways of unlettered and unwritten speech, have given both a language and a literature to myriads of men. In this one way alone the missionaries have been of incalculable

benefit to the orthographies of the world. That the missionaries have done their literary work well may be inferred from the fact that to-day all the reading people on the planet have the Word of God in the tongue wherein they were born. The translation of the Scriptures alone into so many languages is a task so monumental as to justify all the labors of all the missionaries from the days of the apostles until now.

Then, too, the circulation of the Scriptures in all lands has been carried on so industriously and against such bitter opposition as to merit the approbation and to receive the praise of the true lovers of real heroism in all the world. And, marvel of marvels! the very church which was set as the pillar and ground of the truth has at times forbidden the distribution of the Word of God in the language of the people. The foes within the church have always been far mightier than the forces without the church. The foreign missionary has often found that his worst enemies are they of his own ecclesiastical household. Even so, the missionaries

triumphed still; and the circulation of the Scriptures in every land attests the fidelity and the heroism of these men of God who loved not their lives unto death. With ennobling enthusiasm they carried abroad the Word of eternal life. Many fires could not quench their devotion: neither could the floods drown it.

The work of the missionaries has made the peoples of the world accessible to one another. When the gospel has once come into its rightful place in the life, a person is no longer willing to live in isolation. Mankind is so made that nationalities will not always be content to dwell in exclusive provincialisms. Some day all that narrows and contracts will be finally done away. Racial prejudices will vanish forever in the presence of the fuller light which comes from a better knowledge of one another. And in this vital way the missionaries are fast furthering the federation of the world.

Then, too, Christian missions has forwarded the rapidly forming civilizations in mission lands. The proclamation of the gospel message awakens always a desire

for better things. Institutions for human advancement follow ever in the wake of the missionaries of the Christ. And, through it all, belated peoples begin to form nationalities; and these nationalities, as though driven by an irresistible power, drift all unconsciously toward democracies; and the day is not far distant when all kingly governors of the world will be of the people's own choosing.

Far greater even yet are the vast social reconstructions which are being wrought by the missionary's message in every land. Children the world around are coming into a new heritage through the discovery of the thought of God for the childhood of all the races of men. The emancipation of woman from the age-long burdens which have borne her down is most marvelous indeed. And now the serious attempt to meet the total social needs of all men is more wonderful still. It is this everlasting, regenerating, vitalizing gospel which meets every need that the missionaries have carried into all lands.

But not one of these represents, nor even all of them, unprecedented achieve-

ments though they are, represent the greatest accomplishment of the missionary enterprise. For the most extraordinary achievement of the entire missionary enterprise is the Bible itself. This is the fact which stands incontestable: apostolic missions did not grow out of the New Testament, but the New Testament rather, grew out of the active labors of the first missionaries among the apostles.

One of the ancients was wont to say that every address should begin with an incontrovertible proposition. This chapter closes with an incontrovertible proposition: If it had not been for the missionary enterprise, the world would never have had the Bible at all.

CHAPTER III

A SIMPLE QUESTION OF AUTHORS

WHO wrote the books which comprise the New Testament?

Of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament, seven do not contain in themselves the names of their own authors. These seven books, although they are ever so few among so many, comprise three fifths of the entire Christian Scriptures, for they are the four Gospels, the Acts, the Hebrews, and First John. Then there are two other smaller books which leave the name of the writer to be inferred from a descriptive phrase.

What could have been the motive which impelled the writers of the four Gospels to leave out of their books any mention of their names as authors? Doubtless their standing and recognition among Christian believers was so high that it was entirely unnecessary for them to appeal to their authority. It was far otherwise with the apostle Paul. He

always was straitened under the stern necessity of proving that he too had the calling of an apostle.

It is most apparent that the men who wrote the Gospels were particularly eager that all the readers of their message should see Jesus only. They gave themselves to their labor of love with such holy abandon that their own names as authors might have been completely lost. If the world should come to know Jesus as Lord, they were evidently quite willing themselves to be entirely forgotten.

Fortunately for us, the first generations of the Christian converts have preserved the names of the authors of the Gospels, and because of the testimony of those early believers we know that the Gospels were written by the men whose names they now bear. Therefore to the end of the ages the lovers of the Lord will speak of the good tidings as the Gospels according to Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, and John.

The third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles are from the same pen, and Luke is their author.

In the epistles which bear his name Paul's name appears alone in Romans, Ephesians, and in the three Pastoral Epistles to Timothy and to Titus. In First Corinthians Paul associates the name of Sosthenes with his own name. In Second Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon, Paul includes the name of Timothy along with himself in the introductory paragraphs. In Galatians, Paul names "all the brethren that are with me," together with himself, while in the two Epistles to the Thesalonians appear the names of Silvanus and Timothy in company with the name of Paul. Notwithstanding this array of names, these epistles are all known as the letters of the apostle Paul. How, then, does it occur that these names are to be found in the introductions to the epistles?

The names of Sosthenes, and Timothy, and Silvanus, and "all the brethren" appear in the introductory verses just as the names of many friends are found in the salutations. What a charming picture of the utter Christian simplicity that

prevailed in the apostolic church! There is the completest freedom from arrogant ecclesiasticism. Think of the greatest apostle freely associating with his own far-sounding name the name of so youthful a disciple as Timothy!

James, the son of Joseph and Mary, and a younger brother of our Lord, is the author of the epistle which bears his name.

Jude, the brother of James—as though that were honor enough!—wrote the Epistle of Jude.

Peter is the author of the two epistles which carry his name. The title to Second Peter in some ancient manuscripts bears the name of Symeon. There is necessity for the exercise of great restraint in thinking of all that may lie behind in the author's mind when Peter thus late uses his old-time and childhood name.

John is commonly recognized as the author of the three epistles and the book of Revelation.

This leaves the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews still to be determined.

In the King James Version of the Holy

Scriptures the title to the Hebrews reads: "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews," while in all the modern versions of the New Testament the title reads simply, "The Epistle to the Hebrews." Thus Hebrews stands alone as the one book in the New Testament about whose authorship there is serious difference of opinion.

All thoughtful readers are impressed with the marked difference of style between the opening verses of Paul's other epistles, and the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the thirteen epistles from Romans to Philemon, the first word invariably is the apostle's own name. The introductory sentences in nine of the Pauline epistles follow the name of Paul with the strongest possible affirmation of his apostleship. A comparison of these opening verses is most instructive:

Paul, . . . called to be an apostle (Rom. 1. 1).

Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God (1 Cor. 1. 1).

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God (2 Cor. 1. 1).

Paul, an apostle, not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father (Gal. 1. 1).

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God (Eph. 1. 1).

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God (Col. 1. 1).

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Saviour and Christ Jesus our hope (1 Tim. 1. 1).

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God (2 Tim. 1. 1).

Paul, . . . an apostle of Jesus Christ (Titus 1. 1).

God, having of old time, spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken to us in *his* Son (Heb. 1. 1).

Something more than the mere omission of the author's name led studious men long ago to question the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The style throughout is very different from the other acknowledged letters of the apostle Paul.

The question of style, however, in the literary criticism of the Bible is liable to overvaluation. A certain boy away from home at college wrote regularly to his mother. The mother received at least two letters every week from her son. Then one day there came to the mother a large envelope which contained the copy of a contest oration written by her boy. The oration was not the least bit like his letters in style; and the mother sat pondering the rhetorical phrases, and the balanced periods, and the unusual words—and long words at that—and with a look of deep wonder on her face, asked her daughter, “Where do you suppose Willie got all these big words?” And as with labored effort the mother finally finished the reading of her son’s oration, she said, questioningly, “Do you really suppose Willie wrote all this?” The mother has long been with her Lord in the land of tearless joy, and I still affirm with all my heart that I did write the oration myself—every word of it!

However, the entire cast of the Epistle to the Hebrews is in a style totally differ-

ent from the manner of Paul's ordinary writing in the thirteen epistles which bear his name.

In the eastern church, with its educational center in Alexandria, there was the common belief that the church was indebted to the apostle Paul for the Epistle to the Hebrews. The absence of his name, however, called for an explanation. And Pantaenus, at the middle of the second century, accounts for the absence of the apostle's name on the ground of modesty, considering that the Lord Jesus had been sent as the apostle to the Hebrews. Clement of Alexandria, writing near the close of the second century, supposes that Paul omitted his name because the Hebrews were prejudiced against him. But Clement goes a step further, and really questions the Pauline authorship of the epistle from the point of view of its style, suggesting that Paul might have written the epistle in Hebrew, and that Luke translated it into Greek.

Origen was perhaps the greatest scholar in the early days of the eastern church. This great scholar notes the peculiarly

Pauline cast of thought in Hebrews, but the language of the book forces him to the conclusion that it must have been written by some one else. Nevertheless, Origen justifies any church in receiving Hebrews as from the apostle Paul, because the thought of the epistle is so thoroughly and so conclusively Pauline.

A different view of the authorship of the Hebrews was held in the leading centers of the western church in Rome and Carthage. The church of North Africa was in a flourishing condition. Some of the ablest apologists and theologians of the whole Christian era were members of that church. Tertullian especially ranks high on the honor roll of the early church fathers. While the testimony of the western church is wholly against the Pauline authorship, yet it is only upon the statement of Tertullian that Hebrews is ascribed to Barnabas. This capable leader of the Christian forces in North Africa speaks of Barnabas as "a man of such authority that Paul ranks him with himself."

After all, who wrote Hebrews?

It must appear as purest presumption at so late a day to attempt to find out something upon which the Christian scholars of the second century were unable to agree. Origen expressed the opinion that God alone knew who wrote Hebrews. And upon that statement of fact there will be no difference of opinion whatever.

It is a matter of genuine interest, however, to note that the students of Hebrews are quite generally agreed upon these six conclusions:

1. The Epistle to the Hebrews is not a Greek translation of a Hebrew original. The superfineness of the literary finish precludes the possibility of the epistle being a mere translation.

2. The author of the epistle is a Jew. This is determined not alone by the most intimate familiarity with Jewish history and literature, but by the entire background of the argument and structure of the epistle.

3. The author, while a Jew, belonged to that influential body of Jews who were tinged with Greek modes of thought.

Thus the author was a Jew from the Gentile world.

4. The author was not an apostle, for he states clearly that the message of salvation was confirmed unto him along with others by the testimony of the men who had themselves heard the Lord Jesus.

5. The author manifests great familiarity with the ideas of Paul. There is so much similarity between the ideas in Hebrews and the ideas in some of Paul's letters that Origen rightly characterizes the Epistle to the Hebrews as the thoughts of the apostle Paul.

6. The author is skilled in Jewish ceremonial practices. No other book in the entire New Testament makes so large a use of the laws of sacrifice and of the part of the priest in the service of the temple.

Now, of all the men suggested as possible authors of Hebrews there is no one who more completely fulfills these reasonable expectations than does Barnabas, for Barnabas was a Levite who lived outside the land of Palestine. He was the closest possible companion of the apostle Paul in

those controversial days when the Pauline ideas were given their most forceful expression. And Barnabas heard the gospel message from others. Besides all this, Barnabas was never included in the circle of the apostolate. He was not an eye-witness of His majesty, as were Peter and the rest. We may, therefore, reasonably conclude that the assertion of Tertullian is grounded upon very substantial evidence, and that Joseph—who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, a Levite, a man of Cyprus by birth, a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith—is the probable author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

What, then, are the names of the men who wrote the books of the New Testament? There are Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, and John, and Paul, and Barnabas, and Peter, and James, and Jude.

Where did these writers of the books of the New Testament labor? We call some of them apostles, and by that word we frequently confuse the idea that in reality they were simply missionaries, for a further analysis of the record of their

fruitful lives shows most conclusively that these writers were all missionaries. Then every book in the New Testament was written by a missionary.

Now, it may appear as begging the question to make such a sweeping claim after so lately proving the probability that the missionary Barnabas is the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. But suppose for the moment that Barnabas did not write Hebrews. Suppose Hebrews to have been written by any one of the several worthy names which have been championed by able scholars as rightful claimants to the authorship of Hebrews. What then? Simply this: of all the outstanding suggested authors of the Epistle to the Hebrews every one of them was a missionary.

And so the record still stands: every book in the New Testament was written by a missionary. If it had not been for the missionary enterprise, the world would never have had the Bible at all.

CHAPTER IV

WHERE THEY ALREADY HAD BEEN

TWELVE of the epistles of the apostle Paul are addressed either to individuals or to churches. One other epistle is directed to a group of churches—the churches in Galatia. In the order in which the Pauline letters appear in the New Testament, the first nine are addressed to seven Christian communities. These Christian communities are located in places of genuine historic interest.

1. In the early days of the Christian era Rome sat upon her seven hills, the political mistress of the world. Her population ran close to an even million souls, and included a rapidly growing Jewish contingent. Rome was well called the epitome of the world. Her citizens represented every known nationality, and every religion, and every race. Rome was the storehouse of all that was valuable or curious in the empire, the center of political and intellectual life. People from

every part of the known world jostled one another familiarly in her crowded streets.

No one now knows who first proclaimed the gospel in the imperial city, and laid the foundation for that spiritual kingdom which still has its seat upon the banks of the Tiber. However, there were sojourners from Rome in Jerusalem upon the day of Pentecost. It may be assumed that some one from among these visitors to the city of David might have been the first to carry the good news of a risen Lord to the Jewish community in the city of Rome. The effect of the proclamation of the gospel message was the same in Rome as elsewhere in that ancient world. Riots were frequent. These riots became so serious that finally the Christian leaders were banished from Rome by an imperial decree.

2. Corinth, at the time of Paul's first visit, was the capital city of the Roman province of Achaia, and the headquarters of the proconsul. Corinth was a city of great importance, situated on a narrow isthmus—"the bridge of the untiring seas"—with an eastern and a western port.

Thus Corinth was a maritime city. Sailors from every port thronged the city's harbors, and walked the city's streets, and partook of the city's life. A current proverb for abandoned living carries with it still the stigma of the ill of the place—"to live as they do at Corinth." The low moral tone of the city is reflected in the later Christian community. Nowhere else in epistolary literature is to be found another such record of loose living as is pictured in the epistles to the Corinthians. The Corinthian church was founded in turbid waters. Corinth as a community was well characterized as possessing loosened and disintegrating moral fibers. The people were given over to lightness in thought and in speech. And yet they to whom the preaching of the cross at first seemed utter foolishness found at last the power of God unto salvation.

3. Galatia comprised the rich country separated from the Black Sea by Bithynia, while to the east of Galatia lay Pontus and Cappadocia, and to the south and west was Phrygia. Galatia was mostly inhabited by the Celts. And ancient

writers describe the Celtic race as peculiarly impressionable, inquisitive, quick of apprehension, and eager. They were known by their contemporaries as a people of fickle disposition. How clearly all these racial characteristics are portrayed in Paul's letter to the churches of Galatia!

4. Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia, and one of the three great cities of the eastern Mediterranean lands. The city owed much of its pre-eminence in the province to the temple of Diana, the greatest and the most influential in the province of Asia. And Ephesus was boastful of her title as warden of the temple. This is attested by the serious riot which the members of the silversmiths' council were able to arouse because the acceptance of the gospel made heavy inroads into the popular demand for the images of the goddess.

5. Philippi is of special interest as the first place to be evangelized on the continent of Europe. In response to the vision call of the man from Macedonia, Paul embarked upon this special tour of evangelization. Two incidents emerge from

among the many happenings in Philippi. The one relates to the conversion of Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened as she gave earnest heed to the word of eternal life spoken by the missionary at the riverside, "where prayer was wont to be made." The other incident has to do with the rescue of a little slave girl who was kept in bondage for gain by her masters, because of some precocious power of divination which she appears to have possessed. The first friend for Jesus in this new mission at Philippi was a woman of affairs, and, doubtless, a woman of wealth and influence as well. And the last friend was the little slave girl; for immediately following her remarkable transformation, when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, straightway they laid hold on Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the rulers. And the rulers beat them with rods and cast them into prison. But at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang hymns unto God. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, and all were released. And the jailor brought

Paul and Silas out of the prison and took them into his own house, and the magistrates besought them, and asked them to go away from the city. And when Paul and Silas had seen the Christian brethren, they comforted them, and departed. And yet so gracious were the days spent in Philippi, and so beautiful were the lives of the Philippian believers, that Paul thanked God upon every remembrance of them! Philippi can never be forgotten, and the epistle Paul wrote to the Philippians is rightly considered the most radiantly buoyantly joyous of all Paul's letters.

6. Colossæ was situated on the river Lycus, in southwestern Phrygia, but within the Roman proconsular province of Asia. It was not far away from Laodicea and Hierapolis. Colossæ was not evangelized directly by the apostle Paul. The church in Colossæ may have been formed by converts who were won by the preaching of Paul in Ephesus. Late in the days of his first imprisonment at Rome we find Paul planning a journey into the provinces of Asia Minor, and at that time he hoped to visit this church in Colossæ.

7. Thessalonica was the scene of the missionary labors of the apostle Paul following his enforced departure from Philippi. Here Paul found employment and felt at home with the tradespeople of the town. His testimony in the synagogue upon the Sabbath day awoke a favorable response among many people; and yet, once again, the Jews, being moved with jealousy, took unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd set the city in an uproar. And the brethren sent away Paul and Silas by night. And the church at Thessalonica has this signal honor—that it was the first among all the churches to have a letter from the apostle to the Gentiles.

There is still another epistle which is addressed to a church—the Epistle to the Hebrews. While this epistle does not indicate the particular community to which it was written, yet its destination may be inferred from its contents. The epistle is written primarily for a Christian church, a great body of whose members are intimately familiar with the

temple worship of the Jews, and its writing is inspired by some overshadowing catastrophe which is near at hand.

It is more than likely that the letter was addressed to some one of the great Syrian cities. Antioch in Syria probably contained the Hebrew Christians who were the center of the author's solicitous care. How natural that Barnabas should have a special regard for the members of his own race in the chosen city where he labored so zealously for the Lord. Antioch was one of the first centers to be evangelized. The church's membership was cosmopolitan in character. Men of Cyprus and of Cyrene were numbered in its fellowship. These believers included the Grecian Jews in their missionary ministrations. And the Christian community of Antioch was largely composed of people who were animated with Jewish sympathies, full of interest in the temple worship, and glorying in the name of Hebrew. These people spoke the Greek tongue, were familiar with the Greek version of the Old Testament, and were well versed in the sacrificial law.

Then it was in Antioch that Peter, after certain came from James, withdrew his fellowship from the Gentiles. The Jewish element in the Antioch church must have been very strong indeed. And, in the light of a terrible scourge which is about to overtake them, how altogether appropriate that their former leader should remember them in their threatening affliction, and should seek to prevent a worse sorrow. For to one who knew and loved Jesus Christ as Barnabas did, there is no doubting that, once others saw in the Saviour what he experienced, they would never forsake their Lord and Master, who is greater than all angels, the High Priest forever, the author and the finisher of faith.

Now, list the names of all the cities whose churches had epistles written unto them, and the list includes the cities of Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossæ, Thessalonica, Antioch in Syria, and the cities of Galatia. But where is Rome? Where is Corinth? Where is Ephesus? Where is Philippi? Where is Colossæ? Where is Thessalonica? Where is Antioch?

Where are the cities of Galatia? Which one of these cities lies within the borders of the homeland of Palestine? It is significant that of the eight places named, four are in Europe and four are in Asia Minor. Where, then, are the epistles which were written especially for the churches in Judæa, or in Samaria, or in Galilee? It is a striking fact that every epistle in the New Testament which was written to a church was written to a missionary church. If it had not been for the missionary enterprise, the world would never have had the Bible at all.

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST BOOK ABOUT THE
LAST THINGS

THE book of Revelation occupies a unique place among the books of the New Testament. It begins with the word "Apocalypse," and that one word immediately sets the book apart into a class of literature not otherwise found in the accepted list of canonical books which have been vested with apostolic authority.

The last book in the Bible finds the occasion for its writing in the height of the fierce persecutions which had their rise in the reign of Nero. John has been banished to the isle of Patmos, because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. He is in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and he hears behind him a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, "What thou seest, write." And John "saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the

foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle. And his head and his hair were white as white wool, *white* as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." And he said, "I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. . . . Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter." And he was to send what he wrote to the seven churches that were in Asia.

And the opening chapters of the Revelation are taken up with the letters to the seven churches. But in what seven cities do we find the churches to which these letters are sent?

1. Ephesus is the first named among the cities, perhaps because the city itself was the metropolis of the province and

the seat of power. Or it may be that the city was the first in order from the place of the writing of the Revelation. Then, too, Ephesus was the present residence of the apostle John.

2. Smyrna was a Grecian city in the western part of Asia Minor, the most brilliant and splendid of the cities of the province of Asia in the days of the Roman empire. It alone of all the seven cities abides intact to this day. Its church has had an honorable history. It contributed to the noble band of martyrs. The aged Polycarp, disciple of John the beloved, and eighty-six years a Christian, was burned to death in Smyrna in 155.

3. Pergamum was an illustrious city of Mysia, the capital of the province, although built in from the sea and away from the main routes of travel and of trade. The city was renowned as the residence of kings. It was widely known in the ancient world for its large library of 200,000 volumes; and the city excelled in the manufacture of parchment.

4. Thyatira was a flourishing commercial and manufacturing city in Lydia. Numer-

ous trade guilds were organized among the people. The guild of dyers is mentioned in several inscriptions. And the peculiar temptations to the Christians in Thyatira grew out of their connection with these ancient unions, since idolatrous practices were closely observed in the guild meetings.

5. Sardis was an ancient city of Lydia, and in the first century of the Christian era retained still the name of a former grandeur. It had at one time been the home of kings likewise, but at the present time it is a mere village in which a few shepherds dwell.

6. Philadelphia was located in the eastern part of Lydia at the very head of the coast valley which extends inland from the gulf of Smyrna. Beyond the city eastward on the high plateau of Asia Minor extended a field for great usefulness, and there was set the "open door." After the varying vicissitudes of all the centuries there still are to be found in the city which occupies the site of ancient Philadelphia bodies of Christians who are obedient to the word of the Lord.

7. Laodicea was a Phrygian city, lying between Hierapolis and Colossæ, in the valley of the Lycus and on the main trade route. It was rich enough to rebuild after a destructive earthquake without accepting outside aid. It was the center of large banking and commercial transactions. It was also famous for the glossy black wool of its sheep, and for the manufactured garments which were made from it. The very site of the city is now utterly destroyed, and the building materials, taken from the ruins, have been used elsewhere.

These are the cities in which the churches of Revelation are to be found: Ephesus, and Smyrna, and Pergamum, and Thyatira, and Sardis, and Philadelphia, and Laodicea. But these seven cities are all in Asia Minor, and not one of them is located in the land of Palestine. To each of these seven cities the gospel message of a Saviour's redeeming love had been carried by the hands of missionaries.

Then it is clear that the churches to which the one book of prophecy and

revelation in the New Testament was written were all missionary churches. If it had not been for the missionary enterprise, the world would never have had the Bible at all.

CHAPTER VI

SO GENERAL THEY BECOME
PARTICULAR

1. THE Epistle of James was written to that part of the twelve tribes which were known as the Dispersion. This term was applied technically to the Jews who were scattered abroad throughout the Roman world. Nearly every commercial center contained its Jewish community. People of like interests and a foreign tongue always group themselves together in a strange city. Because, however, of their unusually strong racial and religious ties, the Jewish section in these foreign cities became a veritable solidarity. They maintained their own places of worship and instruction. The synagogues of the dispersed Jews were places of commanding power.

In the missionary effort of the early church the almost universal appeal was made, first of all, to the Sabbath congregations which assembled in the Jewish

sections of these foreign cities. And from among these bodies of devout worshipers came the first earnest workers who formed the beginnings of the communities of Christian believers. To such general groups of Jewish Christians the Epistle of James was written.

2. The First Epistle of Peter is addressed to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Peter was the first one among the twelve who was called to give the gospel openly to a Gentile. Yet even after the special call of God in the vision upon the housetop, and in the particular proclamation of the gospel message to Cornelius, the Italian, with all that its acceptance implied, Peter became a missionary mostly to Jews. But the Gentiles and the Jews were members together of the same Christian body. And a letter which was written primarily for the Jewish Christians would also be received by the other Christians in the community.

The reference to Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Bithynia, and Asia enlarges our

conception of the missionary labors of the apostle Peter. These provinces in Asia Minor were the scenes of the labors of a number of the apostles. Portions of these provinces were first visited by Paul. And it is quite probable that Peter, conceiving his ministry to be supplemental to that of Paul, visited many of the same centers. The distinction between their callings—Paul as missionary to the Gentiles and Peter as missionary to the Jews of the Dispersion—might have been clear enough to the apostles in Jerusalem, but it must have been very confusing to the converts upon the foreign field. Nor was this the last time that differences of opinion among the Christian leaders and distinctions in ecclesiastical administration at the home base have embarrassed the ready acceptance of the gospel of redeeming grace and prevented the faster coming of the kingdom of God.

3. The Second Epistle of Peter is addressed to "them that have obtained a like precious faith with us." This second letter is written to the same group of people as the first epistle, only now the

message is not directed primarily to the Jews of the Dispersion. The address of the epistle is greatly broadened. It includes every one who has obtained "a like precious faith with us" in our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. The idea is very similar to those views which were expressed by Peter at the baptism of Cornelius and later before the great Council in Jerusalem. While Peter spoke to Cornelius, together with his kinsmen and his near friends, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the Word, and they spoke with tongues, magnifying God. Then Peter answered the inevitable questions which arose in the minds of Peter's Jewish Christian companions, by asking, "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" And later while Peter was recounting the evangelization of the home of Cornelius the Italian to the brethren in Judæa, Peter bears testimony to the fact that God gave unto them "the like gift as he did also unto us." Then again, in the presence of the Great Council, many years

afterward, Peter refers to this incident and reaffirms his statement that God gave them the Holy Spirit even "as he did unto us." And in this company with himself Peter includes those of his own race who had previously received the like gift of God.

The use of the plural pronoun in the greeting of the Second Epistle of Peter (a like precious faith with "us") is most illuminating. There can be no doubt that Peter has in mind the whole great group of his own race to whom the words of redeeming love first came. Then in sending this letter to those who "have obtained a like precious faith with us," Peter evidently addresses this Second Epistle particularly to the non-Jewish element in the communities to which his first letter had been sent.

The two epistles of Peter were written to the same general Christian communities in the provinces of Asia Minor. The first epistle was written primarily for the Jewish element in the Body of Christ. The second epistle was written primarily for the Gentile element among the growing body of believers in Christ. This order

is Pauline—to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. And, further, it is inspiring to believe that the man who first was chosen to become the apostle to the Gentiles, closes his missionary career with an epistle to the Gentiles—to them that “have obtained a like precious faith with us”: that is, with Peter and his many Jewish friends.

4. The First Epistle of John was written late in the apostle’s life. It was doubtless addressed to the Christians who were living in the territory of the province of Asia contiguous to the city of Ephesus. It reflects a period near the close of the first century, and was evidently sent as a warning to Christians to be on their guard against certain false teachers who had lately appeared in the body of Christian professors. Then, too, a Gentile community was full of idolatry. Ephesus was the center of a degrading idolatrous worship. In such a situation even mature Christians would be in urgent need of words of warning, lest they also might yield to the beguiling allurements of a popular idolatry.

5. Jude is one of the four brethren of our Lord who in the days of his flesh did not believe in him, but, immediately following the resurrection, are found in the company of the Christian believers. The epistle which bears the name of Jude was written to a group of believers among whom the doctrine of God's grace had been proclaimed. This evidently was a Gentile community which had been visited freely by the apostles.

Jude describes himself as brother of James. This, then, was a community in which James was well known. Antioch is the likeliest of all places of the many suggested as the probable destination of the epistle. It was in Antioch that certain parties, purporting to come from James, wrought confusion in the church by starting a movement back to Judaism. It was to the church in Jerusalem, presided over by James, that the church in Antioch sent Barnabas and Paul to protest the actions of these self-imposed troublers of the Christian's peace. It was James who signed the decree of the Council which Barnabas and Paul brought back to

Antioch. To an Antiochan group of believers Jude could most easily identify himself and have his message fully authenticated by merely calling himself the brother of James.

So far, then, as these general epistles are concerned, these conclusions are becoming evident:

James was written to the dispersed Jews gathered in the churches of the Roman world.

First Peter was written to the sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

Second Peter was written to the whole body of believers, particularly the Gentiles, in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

First John was written to the Christians who were living in the territory closely surrounding the city of Ephesus.

Jude was most likely written to the believers in Antioch.

Now, the word "Dispersion" always carries one immediately outside the land of Palestine. To find the Jews of the Dispersion search must be made in the

metropolitan centers of the Roman world. And James wrote to the Jews of the Dispersion.

Then where is Pontus? And where is Galatia? And where is Cappadocia? And where is Asia? And where is Bithynia? And where is Ephesus? And where is Antioch? These names all sound strangely familiar, but yet they are not designations of geographical divisions nor the names of cities in Palestine. Pontus and Galatia, Cappadocia and Asia, Bithynia and Ephesus, and Antioch—all are located in the provinces of Asia Minor, and Asia Minor was almost as foreign to Palestine as Asia to-day is foreign to America.

This, then, is the inevitable conclusion: Every epistle in the New Testament which was written to a general group of believers or to a general group of churches was written to a missionary group. If it had not been for the missionary enterprise, the world would never have had the Bible at all.

CHAPTER VII

ILLUSTRATING THE ANCIENT
ART OF PERSONAL LETTER-
WRITING

SIX of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament are personal letters. Of these six books three are called pastoral epistles, because the instructions which they contain relate mostly to church organization and to church administration. Of these six personal letters, two were written by the apostle John and four were written by the apostle Paul. The six letters are addressed to five individuals: Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Cyria, and Gaius. The six personal letters preserved out of the correspondence of the apostles are First and Second Timothy, Second and Third John, Titus, and Philemon.

1. Second John was written to a Christian woman by the name of Cyria. The home of Cyria was a center of Christian hospitality, and because of the freedom

of access which Christian teachers had to her home on account of her hospitable kindness, her household was all the more imperiled from itinerant teachers who denied the cardinal tenets of the Christian faith. And John writes this commendatory epistle, with its entreating words of warning, in order that the home of a dear friend may be fully protected in the ways of Christian truth. How fitting it is that the one letter in the New Testament which is written expressly to a woman should come from the pen of the one among the twelve disciples to whom the Lord Jesus intrusted the care of his sorrowing and widowed mother.

In the mere fact of this letter to Cyria we have further evidence of the enlarging place which was occupied by women in the apostolic church. Many of their residences were used so freely as places of Christian assembly that their very homes became known as church houses. It was into a home like that that Priscilla and Aquila received Apollos and taught him the way of the Lord more perfectly.

The refining influence of Cyria upon

her own children may be gathered from the testimony which John gives to some of the members of her family whom he has met in Ephesus. For these children, now away from home and living in a big and wicked city, to be found "walking in the truth" is a remarkable tribute to the careful Christian nurture which they had received at the hands of their devoted mother. This one-page letter from the apostle John presents a beautiful picture of a charming home circle of earnest Christians, among whom the early missionaries of the Christ found frequent entertainment and engaging hospitality.

2. Third John is inscribed to Gaius. He appears to be entirely outside the lists of dignitaries and officials in the apostolic church. It is more than likely that Gaius belonged to the humbler followers of our Lord; and yet, perhaps, with even less to give than many others, he bestowed bountiful hospitality upon these working friends of Jesus. How like the goodness of God, whose only begotten Son came to be born of a lowly virgin, and to be cradled in a manger, and to

have the sacrificial offering of the poor made in his behalf upon his presentation in the temple—how like the goodness of God to have the last written message from the apostolic group to be a letter to one of his poor, Gaius by name; humble and poor, and yet very rich in faith and love.

3. Philemon is the one letter among all Paul's epistles in the New Testament which is addressed to an individual upon a purely personal matter. Paul was a prisoner in the city of the Cæsars, living for the space of two years in his own hired house, and receiving all who came unto him. And one day among those who came was Onesimus, a slave from the home of Philemon, Paul's friend, in faraway Colossæ.

Onesimus was a Phrygian slave. The historians give the Phrygian slaves exceptionally bad names. However, Onesimus may have been an exception to the bad run of the common lot of slaves; at least his name appears to imply as much. But one day, perhaps, he failed. And then he ran away to cover up his failure. And

the best place in all the world to hide in is a big city, and off he runs to Rome. Nearly everybody went to Rome.

Onesimus is in Rome, hiding from God.

Paul is in Rome, finding folks for God.

Onesimus comes to Paul from the glamour of the city's appeal. And Onesimus comes to Paul, but Onesimus finds God.

Then Paul writes a letter to Philemon. But the letter is mostly about Onesimus. The runaway slave with the grace of God in his heart has become so good and so faithful and so helpful a servant always that Paul would like to have his company forever. But Paul sends Onesimus back to his former master. And so Onesimus returns to Philemon, but he is a Christian now, and Philemon and Onesimus work so closely together in the service of the Lord that they were honored with martyrdom at the same time. For Philemon and Appia, his wife, and Archippus his son, and Onesimus—his brother now and slave no longer—were all stoned to death in the reign of Nero.

4. First Timothy was written after

Paul's first imprisonment in Rome and while Paul was making a tour of the churches in the eastern Mediterranean lands. In the interim between the two imprisonments in Rome, Paul is confirming the churches in the lands bordering about the Ægean Sea. The Christian communities had grown in numbers and there is need now for some additional administrators. Then, too, in his absence of some five years, these more settled circles of believers had already begun to busy themselves about the less important matters of the Christian faith; and a few among them were propagating views which were entirely contrary to the truths of the gospel. Hence there is imperative need that reliable men be placed in leadership in all the fast-forming church centers. Timothy was such a leader in Corinth, and later in Ephesus.

5. The Epistle to Titus was written also in the time between the two imprisonments at Rome. Titus had been intrusted with the supervision of the work in Crete. Paul speaks of the care he had for all of the churches. Shortly

after the first missionary journey, Paul purposes to visit again all the cities in which the Gospel missions had been started. If "the care of all the churches" was a motive sufficient to engage Paul in a second missionary journey, we may be sure that again, and yet again, he returned in his thoughts and in his travels to the familiar scenes of the more easily accessible places which he had evangelized.

Paul gives a bit of advice to Titus in regard to the culture of the converts which ought to be universally observed. "And let our *people* also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful." Paul himself was the master of a trade. He knew how to work with his own hands. Once and again he worked early and late at his trade in order that he might not be a burdensome charge to anyone. The young Jews were all taught useful trades. And Paul instructs Titus to so supervise the practical training of the Gentile Christian converts that they too may become valuable working members of the social order. In view of this one command alone

there is sufficient apostolic warrant for the development of trade and vocational schools in mission lands.

6. Second Timothy is the last letter we have from the hand of the great apostle to the Gentiles. The scene shifts with dramatic suddenness. In the other pastoral epistles, Paul is touring the fields of his most fruitful missionary labors. He is journeying from point to point, establishing the churches in the fear of the Lord. He is planning future campaigns. He is calling a winter conference for Nicopolis. But instead of the winter conference with Christian workers and friends in Nicopolis, Paul will winter in Rome.

Paul was apparently rudely snatched from his labors of love and returned to Rome. The days between the two Roman imprisonments were days of intense concern and incessant activity. The field was large, and Paul was eager to cover the territory as quickly as possible. It is quite probable that the arrest to his labors occurred in the city of Troas, for the fact that his baggage of books and parchments and clothing were left at Troas,

would seem to indicate that the relentless persecutors had at last accomplished their evil designs; and, perhaps before Paul could assemble his personal belongings, he was bound in chains, treated as a malefactor, and dispatched to Rome.

The ship which bore Paul as a prisoner would doubtless sail by way of Ephesus, Miletus, and Corinth. At Ephesus Paul received some special care from Onesiphorus, who perhaps followed Paul to Rome in order that he might further minister to the prisoner of the Lord. For that touch of true human sympathy we all shall want to thank Onesiphorus some day in heaven. And then, too, at Ephesus, Timothy must have seen the dearest-loved man in all his world closely confined in chains, and it was that sight which so moved Timothy to tears that the aged apostle in prison recalls his poignant sorrow day and night.

Paul once went bound to Jerusalem; then he was bound by the constraint of Christ.

Paul now goes bound to Rome; but now he is fast holden by the chains of Cæsar.

There is the sharpest possible contrast between the first and the second imprisonments of Paul in Rome. In the first imprisonment Paul lived in his own hired house, receiving all who came unto him; while in the second imprisonment in order to find Paul at all, the kind-hearted Onesiphorus had to seek for him most diligently. Formerly Paul was easily accessible to all, but now he is so badly treated that even the place of his confinement is poorly remembered.

And Paul is almost alone now. Only Luke is with him. And in the hour of his utter loneliness he turns to Timothy. And it is to Timothy that Paul writes his last thoughts.

At Paul's first defense no one took his part, but all forsook him. Yet the Lord stood by him, and Paul was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

And now he has a brief respite. For a time at least he is spared. And he hears again the call to the work. He wants his books and his parchments, particularly his parchments. For although in prison, yet Paul must write. And well for us all

that he did write in prison, for the prison literature of the apostle Paul has very greatly enriched the world.

Now Paul writes to Timothy. His first thought is for the work. He is bound—yes, he is bound!—but the word of God is not bound. And in that he can rejoice with all his heart.

Yet the end is near. A great sorrow surges through the soul of Paul. He is in a dungeon—a dungeon dank and damp. And the winter is not far off, and his cloak is at Troas, half way across the empire. Poor Paul! Bring the cloak with you when you come, Timothy; and haste, O haste, Timothy, to reach Rome before winter!

In the hour of his trial in Gethsemane the Master turned to the inner circle of the twelve, Peter and James and John.

In the hour of his trial in the dungeon at Rome Paul turns to Timothy, his beloved child in the gospel.

And Timothy did not fail the one to whom he owed the fact that he was a Christian at all. Timothy hurried to

Rome with all speed, and upon his arrival in Rome he so identified himself with the apostle in chains that he too was imprisoned.

But Paul was a Jew, circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee—a separatist. And yet in the end of the days we find him turning for solace and help to one who was brought up outside the pale of Jewry. By the miracle of God's great grace, Paul had so far accepted his missionary call to the Gentiles that at the last he chose a convert from the Gentile world to be his constant companion.

And so there are these five to whom the apostles Paul and John wrote letters: Timothy and Titus and Philemon and Cyria and Gaius. Yet no one of these five bears a Hebrew name, and no one of the five was a resident in the home land of Palestine. Three of the five names are Greek names: Timothy and Philemon and Cyria. Two of the five names are Latin names: Titus and Gaius.

But who are Timothy and Titus and Philemon and Cyria and Gaius? They are all Gentile Christians.

How, then, came these five to be Christians in the first place? They all were converted to Christ through the labors of the missionaries.

It is now manifest that every letter in the New Testament which was written to an individual was written to the convert of a missionary. If it had not been for the missionary enterprise, the world would never have had the Bible at all.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST VOLUME OF AN
INTERRUPTED SERIES

THE single-volume history of the early church was never intended by the author to be known as *The Acts of the Apostles*. The author of the Acts had a far greater plan in mind than the writing of this volume alone. In the opening verse of the Acts, the author refers to his Gospel; and he calls it "the first treatise." In all Bible translations this word "first" is translated "former." And yet as Luke used this word it never means "former." If Luke had intended to use the word which means "former," the sane judgment of scholarly men must agree that he knew better than to use the word which means "first." Then why did Luke speak of his Gospel as the "first" treatise? For the very obvious reason that he evidently planned a series of books which should amply portray the history of the early days of the founding of the Christian Church.

Why Luke never wrote the additional volumes in his proposed series of books no one now knows. Our Lord and Master went into the fuller presence of the Father with many unuttered thoughts in his mind. For at the end of his earthly journey in the company of the twelve, Jesus said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." The unspoken message of the Master was thus lost to the world. And in a much smaller measure, but even yet a bit like that, it may be, the unwritten history of the doings of the apostles which Luke planned, was likewise carried in the bosom of the disciple "whose praise was in all the churches" into the heavenly land.

And so the Acts is the sole surviving historical record of the Spirit-filled days of the apostolic labors. Luke is a great historian, and is personally familiar with the events in the progress of the book. In the introduction to his Gospel Luke appeals to authorities, for he had carefully examined those who were eyewitnesses to the ministry of Jesus. But in the Acts Luke is himself an eyewitness.

He is present at more than one third of all of the incidents which he records, and he travels in closest companionship with the leading figure in the extension of the Kingdom. Luke is so true to every detail that the greatest student of the travels of the apostle Paul regards the accuracy of the Acts as of so high a character as to constitute the book a guide to travelers in those distant lands.

It is evident from the opening verses of the Acts that Luke conceived the history of the Christian Church to be the continuous work of Jesus, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, in the lives of the followers of Jesus who were to be his witnesses. And the Acts tells simply how the good tidings of great joy which were for all people were first published in Jerusalem, in Judæa, in Samaria, in Galilee, and finally unto the uttermost part of the earth—Rome.

The first eleven verses of the Acts contains the Master's commission to the apostles. These compelling words of the Master are all the more urgent because they are the very last words which the

apostolic group heard from the lips of their risen Lord.

Acts 1. 12—8. 3 is the presentation of the founding of the church in Jerusalem. The apostles are fully obedient to the command of their Lord. They are endued with power from on high, and immediately they preach repentance and remission of sins, beginning at Jerusalem. And on the day of Pentecost, people from every nation under heaven hear in Jerusalem the gospel of the Son of God in the very languages in which they were born. And Jerusalem is thoroughly evangelized. A large company of the priests even are obedient to the word. The apostles so testify to the fact of the resurrection that the Pharisees are silenced. Now occur the first stirrings of the persecutors, and one of the results of the first persecution is a multiplying of the word by the scattering of the workers.

Acts 8. 4—11. 18 tells of the labors of Philip and Peter in Judæa and Samaria; and in the evangelization of these native lands an Ethiopian hears the gospel from the lips of Philip, while an European

receives the message of redeeming love from Peter. Hidden away in these few verses also is the story of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. And so the circle is widening. And "the church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria had peace" after the conversion of Saul; "and, walking in the fear of the Lord and [in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied."

Acts 11. 19—13. 3 recounts the most remarkable development in the work of the early church. It is the proclamation of the gospel to Gentiles. This occurred in Antioch in Syria. And later in Antioch the Holy Spirit called two of their best-known leaders, Barnabas and Saul, and sent them upon the first real journey in the foreign missionary enterprise.

Acts 13. 4—15. 35 comprises the first missionary journey of Barnabas and Saul, and carries them in company with young Mark into the provinces of Asia Minor; and the successes which attend their labors require a church council in Jerusalem to determine authoritatively the attitude of the apostolic church to the work of foreign missions.

Acts 15. 36—18. 22 covers Paul's second missionary journey, and carries the labors of the apostle over into Macedonia. It was in Troas, during this second missionary journey, that the apostle Paul was joined by the historian Luke. With the exception of a brief period, Luke is the constant companion of Paul until the latter reaches Rome.

Acts 18. 23—21. 16 covers Paul's third missionary journey, his three years' residence in Ephesus, and his ministry in Macedonia and Greece, and finally carries the narrative to Troas again.

Acts 21. 17—28. 16 covers the period of Paul's stay in Jerusalem and Cæsarea, with his appearance before the Roman rulers, and the memorable voyage toward the imperial city.

Acts 28. 17—31 pictures the period of Paul's two years' residence in Rome, during which time he was mostly a prisoner in his own hired house.

In such rapid strides Luke covers the thirty years between the ascension of our Lord and the arrival of the apostle to the Gentiles in the city of Rome.

The Acts is a masterful presentation of the successive and ever enlarging scope of the labors of the apostles. First of all, the gospel is so carried into all Jerusalem that the city of David is finally filled with their doctrine; and then the good news is spread abroad throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria. And then only one of the many lines of Christian effort is followed, the one line which like a trail of light leads at last into the eternal city on the banks of the Tiber. The many recorded events in the Acts are merely the recitals of the missionary labors of the apostles. So the Acts is in reality a history of the beginnings of the missionary enterprise. There is no mere chronicling of unusual events, but throughout the entire book of the Acts there is such a studied arrangement of materials as to indicate the author's deliberative purpose. From first to last the Acts is a missionary book.

“Do you teach missions in your Sunday school class?” a thoroughly representative and skilled teacher was asked on a certain Sunday.

“No, indeed!” the teacher replied, with rising indignation; “I teach the Bible!”

And on that particular Sunday this teacher was teaching a lesson from the book of the Acts to a class of boys fifteen years of age! And the lesson for that Sunday was a portion of one of Paul’s missionary journeys! Teaching the Acts, and yet not teaching missions! Tracing the journeys of the missionary Paul upon the map of the world, as he carried the gospel from nation to nation, and from continent to continent, and yet not teaching missions!

Since the Acts is altogether a history of the beginnings of the missionary enterprise, if there had never been a missionary enterprise, why, of course, there would never have been any Acts of the Apostles. Besides all that, the only authoritative historian in the early church—Luke, the beloved physician—was himself the convert of a foreign missionary. If it had not been for the missionary enterprise, the world would never have had the Bible at all.

CHAPTER IX

WHY THEY WERE CALLED
NAMES

ANTIOCH in Syria lay on the north bank of the river Orontes, fifteen miles distant from the Mediterranean Sea. Of the great cities of the Roman empire, Rome and Alexandria alone excelled Antioch in prestige and in power. Antioch was the capital of the Roman province of Syria. It had not always been the capital of the country, for whenever the rulers from the desert country to the east held sway over the Syrians the capital was Damascus. And Antioch owed her place of political preeminence to the fact that the seat of government lay now to the west and centered upon the banks of the Tiber.

It was in Antioch, rich and powerful, that the gospel was preached to the Gentiles by the men from Cyprus and Cyrene. It was to Antioch that Barnabas came, with the approval of the apostles in Jerusalem. It was in Antioch that Barna-

bas and Saul worked for one year, and then carried the offerings of the church in Antioch to the relief of the famine sufferers in Judæa.

And it was in this same city of Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians.

The word for "Christian" is "Christiano." Among the fruits of archeological research in the Levant has been the discovery of an ancient inscription which bears the word, "Chrestiano." And the only difference between the two words is in the third letter, where the one word has the letter "i" and the other word has the letter "e."

The word "Christiano" is derived from the word "Christos," and means "anointed." This is the word for Christ.

The word "Chrestiano" is derived from the word "Chrestos," and means "useful," "pleasant," and possessing those qualities which are bound up with the idea of manageable and good.

In one of the Roman historians, the expulsion of the Jews from Rome was explained to be due to the continual dis-

turbances in the Jewish quarter which were occasioned by one Chrestos. And there can be hardly any doubt but that this is merely the popular confusion of the two words "Christos" and "Chrestos."

There is a wealth of interpretative meaning all bound up with the suggestion that the followers of the Christ may, at one time in the city of Antioch, have been called "Chrestians"—the people of the good and useful lives. There may be, in this word, still the recollection of the charity which that first missionary church sent to relieve the suffering in a land laid low by famine. It is a most notable picture—the picture of the people who were so useful as to be called familiarly by that word of gracious generosity.

The word which has lived, however, is the word "Christian," first applied to the disciples of Jesus in the city of Antioch. And it can hardly have been given to the members of the church in the spirit of derision, for Antioch is one of the relatively few communities of that ancient world in which the church suffered little or no persecution at the first. The word "Chris-

tian" evidently was bestowed upon the believers in Antioch because of the singular devotion which characterized them in the performance of their tasks. The cordial way in which they accepted all who came, the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, their abounding charity, their love one for another—all this so reminded the populace of the Christ the church leaders preached about that the common folks distinguished the members of the church from the rest of the people by calling the disciples Christians.

And we later followers of the Christ bear many names, and yet the one name we all most gladly bear is the name "Christian"; and the very name "Christian" comes to us as a precious legacy from the first foreign missionary church.

CHAPTER X

NATIVE SONS USING EXCLUSIVELY
A FOREIGN TONGUE

ALL the books of the New Testament are written in Greek. And yet the native language of all the authors, except one, was Hebrew or Aramaic. Hebrew was the language of Palestine in the early days of the Christian centuries. How, then, can we account for the fact that all the books in the New Testament were written in Greek?

While Paul was born in Cilicia, he yet spoke Hebrew as though it had been his only mother tongue. And, indeed, Hebrew must have been his mother tongue, for in a home as Jewish as Paul's home, the language of the fireside was the language of the loved land of Palestine.

In the time of Christ Greek had become the language of the market, but Hebrew still was the language of religion. And a people with as strong a racial consciousness as the Jew would too much resent the dominance of Rome to yield wholly to

the use of the language of the foreigner.

While nearly everybody used some Greek in trade and travel, yet comparatively few were taught thoroughly the finer uses of the language. The people from distant lands who happened to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost perhaps knew some Greek, but if a message full of spiritual power and majesty is to reach their hearts, that message must be delivered in the language in which each was born.

The Galilæans among the twelve apostles had exceptional opportunities to master Greek, for the great trade routes between the west and the east circled about the Sea of Galilee. The apostles were chosen largely from the common walks of life, and they were men whose relations in the commercial world would necessitate their use of Greek, since the Grecian tongue was the great medium in which to buy and sell.

The Greek of the New Testament is very different from classical Greek. The Hebrew men who wrote in Greek wrote

not in the language of the school men, but, rather, in the language of the common people, for the Greek they knew was the Greek which was spoken commonly on the streets, in the marts of trade, along the highways, in the caravansaries, and at the customs.

For Galilee was Galilee of the Gentiles. The people of the nations poured in ceaseless streams along the main routes of travel which lay across Galilee. Capernaum, where Levi sat at the seat of toll, was an important gateway, and Nazareth was a familiar camping ground for the passing caravans.

The cumulative influence of the Greek language upon the people in Galilee may be seen in the names of two brothers. One was called Symeon when he was named before the priest in the synagogue, but in the business world he became Simon. When a later son was born he was given the Greek name of Andrew.

And yet some of the writers in the New Testament use very beautiful Greek. How does it come that men who so largely gathered their Greek from seemingly inci-

dental sources were able later to command such a wonderful mastery in literary style? It should be remembered that the more highly cultured people traveled freely, and in the simple plans for hospitality in that land, they would easily be accessible to the people about the lake who were engaged in commercial pursuits.

Then, too, much of the wonder of the way the men wrote in the New Testament is due largely to the ideas which they had to express. The thoughts of God so illumined their minds that modes of elegant expression became a literary necessity. To-day we have the marvel of a gypsy boy, who never went to school, but who because of constant meditation upon the Word of God has won a command of English superior to most students of literary form.

However, there is one author among the many in the New Testament whose authorship is questioned because he appears to write too well! How did James in particular acquire such usages of Greek as to enable him to write so commendable a piece of literature as his epistle? Come

and see. And we go apart into the home of a workingman in Nazareth, for James is the oldest son of a certain carpenter, Joseph by name, and the mother of James is Mary. Read again the Magnificat, and remember that it is the mother of James who so marvelously pours out her soul in praise to God. Mary is a woman of great gifts and a woman of rare literary skill. And growing up in a home like that, James too would receive splendid literary training. Then think of the Lord Jesus, and his use of words and phrases—so simple, so profound, so beautiful that the common people hear him gladly. And the Virgin Mary is the mother of Jesus. James had exceptional advantages to acquire exquisite literary finish with Mary as his mother.

Nevertheless, Greek was always the foreign tongue to the people in Palestine. It was not the language of the rabbis in particular. It was not the language of the priests. Hebrew or Aramaic was the vernacular spoken in Judæa, in Samaria, and in Galilee. Still each province had a distinctive dialect. The difference

in these various dialects was distinctive enough in the case of Peter, for one to discover that he was a Galilæan by the way he spoke. The difference between the Aramaic as it was spoken in Judæa and the Aramaic as it was spoken in Galilee was so marked that the people at the crucifixion misunderstood the Master when he used the language of his childhood in his agonizing cry upon the cross.

Why, then, did the authors of the New Testament use Greek instead of Aramaic? They used Greek because Greek was the universal language—the missionary language. Greek was the language which was spoken by the people in all the different lands to which their books would go and among whom their letters would be read.

However, there is the record of one book at least which was written in Aramaic. Matthew wrote a Gospel in Aramaic—a book which has been lost altogether. If the New Testament had all been written in Aramaic, it might likewise have been lost.

The language of the New Testament

is the language which the apostles used in their missionary labors. The books which they may have written in any other language are not now known among men. The missionary enterprise determined the language in which the truly Christian Scriptures should be written.

CHAPTER XI

MAP-MAKING WHICH WAS
UNINTENTIONAL

THE most conspicuous markings upon most maps of the early Christian world are the missionary journeys of the apostle Paul. And even where these journeys are not indicated by dotted lines, yet the names of the places and the boundaries of the nations are largely determined by the history which recounts his missionary labors. The map of the apostolic church is a missionary map. However, if we had the missionary labors of all the apostles and could indicate upon a map of that ancient world their extended travels, the results would reveal the fact that Paul was only one among many apostles.

Moreover, the Acts of the Apostles does not cover the later years of Paul's life. Still, we have enough facts from his abundant missionary labors to make the map of his day look particularly Pauline.

And yet, if we did not have the Acts of the Apostles to guide us, how utterly futile would be all attempts to construct a map of the journeys of Paul! It is more than likely that the most intensely active period in Paul's life was the period between the two Roman imprisonments; and yet no one has been able to trace those important missionary journeys upon the map of the Roman world. Now, if we had only Paul's letters and the few references in other literature, and were without the Acts of the Apostles to direct us, we would be all at sea in arriving at anything like a complete picture of the missionary labors of Paul.

That, however, is the exact situation in regard to the other apostles. We follow Peter and John for a little while only in the Acts; and then we lose sight of them altogether. For the further labors of these devoted apostles we are thrown entirely upon other sources. There are frequent references to the labors of the apostles in many lands, but there is not now any possibility of constructing connected journeys such as we are fortunate

in possessing for the great apostle to the Gentiles.

Consider the case of Matthew as an illustration of our great loss in not possessing a complete story of the first founding of the Christian Church in ever so many of those ancient lands. There sift through the literature of those early days frequent references to the missionary labors of this publican among the apostles. These numerous references associate the name of Matthew with many mission fields. These fields are so numerous that one late writer says that Matthew is supposed to have gone to every known and to some unknown lands! And from that he is inclined to argue that possibly Matthew did not go to any land. Perhaps a similar observation might have been made as to the extended travels of the apostle Paul, if it did not happen that we have the Acts in which are presented Paul's progressive journeys and labors in an orderly form. Since the name of Matthew is seen in connection with such a large number of different fields, it appears to be the most reasonable conclusion that

Matthew doubtless was a widely traveled missionary. And is not that exactly what one might be led to expect from a man who lived for long years upon the main routes of overland travel, and who must have formed friendships with travelers from many lands?

If the further knowledge of the missionary labors of only one out of the many apostles makes the map of the early Christian world appear like a successive series of missionary journeys, what a missionary map we would possess were we able to trace with equal accuracy all the missionary journeys of the other apostles!

CHAPTER XII

WHEN CHARITY BEGAN AT HOME

THE first five chapters of the Acts is filled with the thrilling story of the great progress of the gospel in Jerusalem. With increasing joy the apostles are teaching and bringing good tidings of Jesus as the Christ. It is a scene of compelling loveliness. True there have been scourgings and many petty persecutions, but what of that! For through it all the number of the disciples is multiplying, and the interest is deepening on every hand.

Then suddenly the storm breaks! It is not the outburst of a fierce persecution on the part of the public authorities. It is nothing from the outside at all. It is, rather, the explosion of a growing discontent on the inside. And the record reads: "There arose a murmuring of the Hellenists against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." Earlier still stand the words, "And all that believed were to-

gether, and had all things common," "for neither was there among them any that lacked, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and . . . distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need."

But now it is the Hellenists who are opposed to the Hebrews—the Hellenists murmuring because their widows are neglected in the daily ministration. Hellenists against Hebrews—and the apostles are all Hebrews!

The wonderful way in which the apostles meet this first great crisis in the early church shows the value of their practical training in the commercial world before they became apostles, and is ample justification forever of their selection to the apostolate. They call together all the multitude of the disciples, and place the selection of the seven deacons for the better caring of the charity of the church into the hands of the entire body of believers. And Luke says that this suggestion of the apostles pleased the whole multitude. The disciples met the murmuring of the Hellenists by choosing

seven men; and judging by the names of the seven so chosen they chose all Hellenists!

This first serious problem in the early church was a missionary problem. All the embarrassments of differences in training and of racial antipathies may be seen in this swift alignment of the foreign born against the native Jew in the old homeland. And so soon as there was the slightest occasion which might warrant it, immediately there are the parties—Hellenist against Hebrew.

The wise decision of the apostles inaugurated a new day in church administration. This was their first lesson in becoming all things to all men that they might by any means save some. And the whole multitude became as Hellenist to the Hellenists, and saw the issue so clearly from the viewpoint of the Grecian Jews that the crowd of believers appear to have selected seven Hellenists to care for the matter in hand.

And that question was settled for all time, because in granting representation to the neglected group the disciples removed

forever any suspicion of partiality in administration. They set a precedent it would be well for all mankind to follow clear through to the end of the days.

Both parties to that first dispute have long since been gathered to their fathers, and yet the principle upon which they registered their decision is applicable to all mission fields to-day. For it is notable that the first question of administration to arise in the apostolic church was a question which grew out of the missionary labors of the early church.

CHAPTER XIII

ONE CONFERENCE THAT REGISTERED A DECISION

IF a Gentile should desire to become a Christian, must the Gentile first become a Jew?

To appreciate this historical situation in the apostolic church at anything like its true value it must be remembered that there was a wonderful advantage in being a Jew, for to the Jew had been intrusted "the oracles of God." What a magnificent racial heritage is bound up in so simple a saying, "the oracles of God"! That was a treasure of value beyond the measure of the mind of man. God had spoken to their Jewish forefathers through the prophets and in the services of the sanctuary, so that truly to be a Jew was to be the possessor of a goodly inheritance.

And in the light of the greater distinction which belonged primarily to the Jew, we need not wonder that the controversy

over the equal admittance of Gentiles to Christian fellowship should occasion a controversy of such stupendous proportions.

Barnabas and Paul returned to Antioch upon the completion of their first missionary journey. In recounting the truly remarkable things which had been done, they told how God had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. And as these pioneer missionaries of the Christ "tarried no little time with the disciples in Antioch, certain men came down from Judæa, and taught the brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved."

Hitherto most of the opposition to the first missionaries had been from outside the Christian community. But hereafter the intensest opposition to the missionary enterprise is to come almost wholly from inside the group of believers.

In Antioch the gospel was first proclaimed to Gentiles, and again in Antioch the call of God came for the beginning of the missionary enterprise which should carry the gospel to all Gentiles. These significant events were soon known in

Judæa, and later when the first missionaries returned to tell the splendid success which had attended their labors, the report of the acceptance of the gospel by the Gentiles aroused the apprehension of the Judaizing party in the homeland, and certain men from among them came to Antioch to oppose and hinder this missionary tendency in the apostolic church.

The question of the right of the Gentiles to the fullness of redemption by faith in Christ Jesus alone is carried to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. And this controversy concerned Christianity itself. For that conference of the apostles and the elders, with the company of believers in Jerusalem, largely determined by their decision whether Christianity should be a universal or a provincial religion.

And the missionaries Barnabas and Paul return again to Antioch, having won a notable victory in the conference at Jerusalem. The law of circumcision is not to be held as binding upon a Gentile. A Gentile may become a Christian with-

out first becoming a Jew. Christianity is to be a universal religion.

Yet our rejoicing is premature. It is true that the apostles and the elders decided that the law of Moses was not to hold in the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. But, for all that, the conflict over the Judaizing tendency raged so fiercely in every mission field, and the pressure of the "back to Moses movement" was sufficiently strong even in liberal Antioch to carry Peter entirely with it, and to lead Barnabas into a compromising position.

But how did it ever come about that this question in regard to circumcision for the Gentiles was ever raised in the first place? The entire controversy grew out of the activity of the two men whom the church at Antioch sent as missionaries to the needy world. Neither Barnabas nor Paul hoped to save the world by winning the Gentile and losing the Jew. Their ministry was always to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile. It was only in the end of the days, and after the fiercest struggles, and under the in-

tensest opposition, that Paul finally turned away from his hope of winning the Jew and devoted himself completely to his mission to the Gentile.

Why, then, did this bitter, age-long, never-tiring controversy arise in the early church?

This question grew naturally out of the wide extension of the gospel invitation to include the needy in all lands. It was inevitable that this controversy should arise out of the missionary labors of Barnabas and Paul. And in the discussion at that early conference of the leaders in Jerusalem we have the first declaration of the apostles in matters of missionary procedure.

In an analysis of the controversies which were serious enough to find a place in the annals of the lives and the labors of the apostles we discover that all questions of extended discussion in the early church were matters which related alone to the missionary enterprise.

CHAPTER XIV

STRANGE TRAVELERS VENTURING ON NEW TRAILS

IN the opening days of the public ministry of our Lord some obscure men became disciples. These men were gathered in what appears to be a purely incidental way in the beginning. A mighty movement for social justice, as well as for religion, was led by John the Baptist, and a few of these first-chosen disciples had been in the company of John.

Then one day the Son of man came; and as Jesus passed by, John bore such gracious testimony to him that two of his disciples left John and followed Jesus. One of these two found his own brother and brought him to Jesus. And the day after, Jesus spoke to another; and upon his becoming a disciple, he told a friend of his; and this friend likewise became a disciple.

Thus the circle widened, and soon crowds of people were following the Christ.

And out of all the vast throng of people, the Master chose twelve disciples in particular that they might be with him. And Jesus called the twelve so chosen apostles. There are four complete lists of the names of the twelve given in the New Testament:

MATT. 10. 2-4	MARK 3. 16-19	LUKE 6. 14-16	ACTS 1. 13
PETER	PETER	PETER	PETER
ANDREW	JAMES	ANDREW	JOHN
JAMES	JOHN	JAMES	JAMES
JOHN	ANDREW	JOHN	ANDREW
PHILIP	PHILIP	PHILIP	PHILIP
BARTHOLOMEW	BARTHOLOMEW	BARTHOLOMEW	THOMAS
THOMAS	MATTHEW	MATTHEW	BARTHOLOMEW
MATTHEW	THOMAS	THOMAS	MATTHEW
JAMES SON OF ALPHÆUS	JAMES SON OF ALPHÆUS	JAMES SON OF ALPHÆUS	JAMES SON OF ALPHÆUS
THADDÆUS	THADDÆUS	SIMON THE	SIMON THE
SIMON THE CANANÆAN	SIMON THE CANANÆAN	ZEALOT	ZEALOT
JUDAS ISCARIOT WHO ALSO BE- TRAYED HIM.	JUDAS ISCARIOT WHO ALSO BE- TRAYED HIM.	JUDAS SON OF JAMES JUDAS ISCARIOT WHO BECAME A TRAITOR.	JUDAS SON OF JAMES.

A comparison of these four lists of the twelve apostles leads to the discovery of the apparent omission of one name from the group and the seeming addition of another name.

In John's Gospel Nathanael appears as one of the twelve. It is probable that Nathanael is the other name for Bar-

tholomew. In the conversation with Peter, Jesus addresses him as Simon, son of Jonah; and this might be written Simon Barjonah. Likewise the name of Nathanael might well be Nathanael Bartalmi. It is quite probable that these two words, Nathanael Bartholomew, together form the full name for that disciple in whom Jesus said there was no guile.

The name of Judas son of James has all the appearance of being an additional name. But now Bible students generally regard Thaddæus and Judas son of James as the names of one person.

Eleven of the twelve were Galilæans, while only one of the entire group was a Judæan.

To these men Jesus gave the command to go into all the world. To what extent did they obey this command of their Lord?

It is an all too frequent lament that there are so few workers in the church. But it was far otherwise in the apostolic church. In those early days there appear to have been too few writers of permanent records. They did not lack for workers in the early Christian Church. Their

need, as we realize it to-day, was the dire necessity for writers of history. Would that there had been enough Lukes for each of the twelve apostles to have had his own historian!

The apostles were first given the task of the evangelization of Jerusalem and the rest of the land of Palestine. They gave themselves to this engrossing bit of labor with such holy abandon that they largely accomplished this most difficult task in a few brief years.

There were peculiar claims which the very land of Palestine would make upon their lives. It was home, and the love of the native homeland was deeply rooted in a Jew. Who can stand unmoved beside the canals in Babylon and look upon the Hebrew exiles as they weep at the remembrance of their native land? And who that has heard in imagination the wail of the singers can ever forget the utter despair in the pathos of their words,

“If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,

Let my right hand forget her skill.

Let my tongue cleave to the roof of
my mouth.”

If the land of Israel meant so much to the Jew in the days of the captivity, notwithstanding all the horrors of the dark days of oppression and misrule, what must have been the wealth of meaning in the land of Palestine to the twelve apostles through the wonderful associations which grew out of their fellowship with the Master! The occupations of the people, the birds of the air, the flowers of the field, the roadside, the sky, the lake, the city, the poor, the sick, the homes, the leaven, the fishing, the sowing, the reaping—every moment of every day would be vested with some exceedingly precious memory and suggestive of the words and of the work of the Master. Their intimate associations with the Master deepened a thousandfold every loving desire for the land of their birth.

How far, then, did these twelve Jews whom Jesus called to be apostles—how far did they obey the command of Christ to go into all the world and to make disciples of all the nations?

The Master bade these lovers of their native land to begin from Jerusalem.

That was a service of such genuine joy as to make them glad even when they were afflicted with sore persecutions.

The Master bade these men, whose love for their homeland was greatly intensified by the love of their Saviour, to evangelize all Judæa and Samaria. That, too, was an undertaking of supreme delight.

The Master bade these men to witness for him unto the uttermost part of the earth. Did they do it?

1. "The first Peter" is the way Matthew begins his list of the twelve. And Peter's name is always in the lead. His name was Symeon, but in business life "Symeon" became "Simon." The later use of the name "Symeon" on rare occasions adds a certain charm to studies which are appreciative of the finer associations that are bound up with early life. And one day Simon met his Lord, and once again his name is changed, and he is called Petros, and it means "Rock." And "Peter" is a new name. It is unlike anybody else's. And so he will be remembered as Peter for all time.

Peter was a great traveler. He is seen

in the task of evangelizing the villages among the Samaritans, and on other journeys which take him to Joppa and Cæsarea. Peter was in Syria, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Bithynia, Asia, Babylonia, Greece, and Rome. In these countries surely, and in many other lands most probably, Peter bore witness to the saving grace which had come to all men through Jesus Christ.

2. "And Andrew." It reads like that always. He is forever "and Andrew." He never appears alone. He is always in company with somebody else. In the four lists of the apostles, the name of Andrew is continually coupled with the name of another.

Andrew is linked with the missionary enterprise which led in the spread of the gospel to the north and northwest of the homeland. He was a part of the movement which enlarged the Christian borders in Syria, Galatia, Pontus, Scythia, and the coast country of the Black Sea. His further labors were in Thracia, Macedonia, and Achaia.

Andrew was so constant in his devo-

tion to his Master, and so diligent in prosecuting the work of the Lord, that his persecutors invented a new instrument of cruel torture with which to wreak upon this missionary of the Christ their unholy will. Then when you are tempted to think of Andrew as only a shadow of his older brother, take another look at the Saint Andrew's cross; and remember what sacrificing personal obedience to Jesus Christ lies behind that emblem upon which "and Andrew" paid the last full measure of devotion to his Lord.

3. James is first known as the son of Zebedee, and he is later known as the brother of John. Blessed father of two so great sons! The father had high hopes for his sons. The attitude of the family is reflected in the mother's eager longing that the two so worthy sons might occupy the chief seats in the coming kingdom of God. And the two sons were called "sons of thunder." They had initiative, and they were both influential.

To James fell the choice of the apostles to be recognized as the leader of the

church in Jerusalem. While Peter was the spokesman in the early days of the first ministry in Jerusalem, yet there is warrant for believing that the head of the Jerusalem church was always some one other than the man who is named first in the lists of the apostles. James evidently pressed the campaign in Jerusalem with great vigor, for in some way he incurred the special displeasure of Herod the king. He was beheaded for the sole reason that he was the acknowledged head of the church.

4. John is the disciple whom Jesus loved. To John the Master gave the charge to sustain his virgin mother. John came very young into the circle of the twelve. Yet Peter and John were the inseparables. Peter and John were side by side at the Last Supper, and they ran together to the empty tomb on the first Easter morning. Peter and John walk together toward the temple at the hour of prayer, and their association is so constant that the apostles send them on the errand for the supervision of the newly opened mission fields of Samaria;

and Peter and John together promote the evangelization of the villages of the Samaritans.

John traveled extensively in missionary labors, and, after visiting Rome and many other places, fixed his residence permanently in the city of Ephesus.

Two especially fine stories come drifting down the centuries from the days of John's residence in Ephesus. One story is an echo of the heated debate John had had with Cerinthus, the arch heretic in John's estimation. And the story tells how John walked one day into the public baths, and there he saw Cerinthus—and turning quickly upon his heels John walks swiftly from the baths and down the street. This is the same John we know as one of the "sons of thunder." And it is a delight to know that he is coming along in years with his natural force unabated.

The other story completes the picture. John is too old now to walk alone, and the young men carry him to the services of grace, and John says a single word that would make him to be known any-

where; for he says, "Little children, love one another."

So we take our leave of the apostle of love. We saw him leaning on the bosom of the Master, and now we find him leaning upon the shoulders of the young men in Ephesus, while underneath him are the everlasting arms.

5. Philip was a fellow townsman of Peter and Andrew. Aside from the naming of the twelve, Philip appears only in the Gospel of John. Philip shared with the rest of the apostles in the evangelization of the homeland of Palestine, and then he too went into foreign fields. He is supposed to have aided in the evangelization of Lydia, Phrygia, Asia, Parthia, and Galatia. His zeal for Christ carried him as far as Athens, and later he returned to become the leader of the church in Hierapolis.

6. Nathanael Bartholomew owes his call to the friendship of Philip. The ties of friendship are often closer than the ties of kinship; and there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. And Philip knew that kind of a Friend, and he wanted Nathanael to know him too.

Along with the rest of the apostles Nathanael participated in the abundant missionary labors incident to the evangelization of the homeland—the first stage in the Master's program for the complete evangelization of the whole world. Nathanael is supposed to have followed the line most frequently traveled between Jerusalem and Antioch in Syria, and to have labored in Syria, and Armenia, and Pontus, and Scythia, and the coast country of the Black Sea. In addition to the provinces in Asia Minor, Nathanael is thought to have made a missionary journey into India before his final location as the settled apostle to Armenia.

7. Thomas is a famous illustration of how a partial view of a man's life may be an altogether false view of the man as he really is. There are three scenes in the friendship of Thomas for Jesus which ought always to be taken together. Jesus is some distance from Judæa with his disciples when the news comes of the serious illness of Lazarus. At that time the organized opposition was so strong that it might mean instant death for

Jesus and his friends to work in Judæa at all. And the Master proposes a return to the very land in which his life will be placed in immediate danger. The disciples tried to dissuade Jesus from risking his life by a return to the environs of Jerusalem, but the Master will go. And then Thomas, thoughtful but resolute, says, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

There was that same determined spirit in the question which Thomas asked at the Last Supper—the question in which Thomas inquired for the way along which the Master was about to go; for wherever the way led, Thomas was prepared to follow his Lord.

The desire on the part of Thomas for the proof of the resurrection was exactly similar to the demands which were made by the other apostles. They too had all been satisfied with evidence of the Lord's rising from the tomb, and Thomas would be satisfied likewise. The confession of Thomas, "My Lord and my God," is one of the grandest confessions ever framed by human lips.

In the selection, or it may be in the

assignment, of missionary fields, the work for Thomas lay to the north and eastward, and he first works among the Parthians in the country south of the Caspian Sea. Then came the call to India. But the way to India was all hedged about—the barriers were insuperable. The common ways of travel were closed. In the midst of his distress Thomas has a vision of his risen and reigning Lord; and now, under the inspiration of that vision of the Christ, Thomas sells himself as a slave to a merchant of India in order that he might reach the destination of his mission field.

8. Matthew the publican—a new name for a man with an old relation. Levi sat at the seat of toll as Jesus passed by and called him, and Levi arose from the customs office, and Matthew followed Jesus. And Levi the taxgatherer is Matthew to the Christians forever.

In his missionary labors Matthew is represented as journeying to many lands. All the provinces of Asia Minor are included in his lists of missionary fields. The territory lying between the Black Sea

and the coast of India is reckoned as coming under the evangelizing influence of this publican among the disciples.

9. James the son of Alphæus is mentioned in the lists of the apostles. Nowhere else in the New Testament is there any reference to him, except, of course, as he is naturally included in the remarkable labors of the apostles throughout the earlier chapters of the Acts. The name of James, the son of Alphæus, occupies a position of prominence in the list of the twelve, since his name always stands at the head of the third group of fours into which the apostolic group is divided. His foreign missionary labors are thought to extend to the south of Judæa, reaching into Egypt, and extending finally into the north of Africa.

10. The confusion of the three names for the one apostle is gradually becoming clear. The more modern study of the Greek text has eliminated the reading Lebæus in Matthew, so there are now only the two forms—Thaddæus and Judas, the son of James. These two names are identified as belonging to this particular disciple.

Thaddæus is thought to have gone first of all to the eastern countries, and his name is associated with the evangelization of the lands of Parthia, Mesopotamia, and Babylonia. He is generally thought to have made Edessa a center for evangelization, and to have penetrated as far as India. He is also thought to have been a missionary to Africa, for one of the well-founded traditions in the early church pictures him as having mastered an African language in order that he might preach the gospel on that continent.

11. Simon the Cananæan presents a study of enthrusting interest. In several of the lists of the twelve he is spoken of as Simon the Zealot. The Cananæans were a popular body of progressives in the early days of the Christian era. And Simon joined the Cananæans. He soon found, however, something far better in the call of the Christ. But Simon brought over into his new allegiance the same intense feeling which impelled him to cast in his lot with the political enthusiasts. Simon left the crowd, but he never lost out of his life the enthusiasm which

carried him into the progressive movement. And so to the end of the days he was always known as the Cananæan.

It might naturally be supposed that one so earnest, so enthusiastic, so full of zeal and power, would go to great lengths in his missionary service. Simon the Cananæan's field of labor ran to the east, and then north and south, stretching all the way from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, and beyond; and from the shores of the Caspian Sea clear to India. Following his work as an itinerant missionary, Simon settled later in Egypt.

To what extent, then, did the twelve seek to carry out the command of Christ to go into all the world and make disciples of all the nations?

The briefest survey of the missionary labors of these heroic souls is sufficient to attest the full obedience which they rendered to their Master's great command. And out of the missionary labors of the apostolic church grew the books of the New Testament. If it had not been for the missionary enterprise, the world would never have had the Bible at all.

CHAPTER XV

FALLEN HERALDS WHO LIE IN
FOREIGN LANDS

THE life story of eleven out of the twelve apostles is full of fascination. So mightily did they witness to Jesus Christ that they soon filled all Jerusalem with their doctrine. Then the circle widens. Samaria is touched; and then the interest grows, and all Judæa feels the thrill of a purer life; and then Galilee; and then on to Syria, and then south, and east, and north, and finally west run the lines of light, and on these broadening lines of light we find an apostle carrying the message of the world's Redeemer.

The apostles wrought so magnificently that within a single generation the uttermost part of their known world had heard the glad tidings of the Son of God who came to seek and to save the lost.

The number of the followers of Jesus was very large. All the cities of the Roman world had Christian communities in them. There were Christians among

the slaves as well as saints among the household of Cæsar. All ranks of society contributed to the membership to be found in the early church.

Cities mostly are mentioned in the missionary labors of the apostles. And yet the villages were not overlooked. The cities, however, formed the strategic centers from which as a base they could carry on an active propaganda into the surrounding country.

After all, we too frequently infer from the repeated references to the cities in the ministry of the early missionaries that in the days of the apostles the Christian communities were confined principally to the cities. Jesus bade the apostles to be his witnesses in all Judæa and Samaria; and reasoning from the thorough manner in which they evangelized the provinces of Palestine, it is most certain to assume that they followed the same effective means elsewhere.

That the apostles promoted the entire evangelization of the rural sections and the villages is evidenced by a statement from Pliny, who affirms in a letter which

was written very late in the first Christian century that the whole province of Bithynia was overrun with the believers in Jesus. Pliny was set for the execution of the Christians, and he reasons from their great number that their slaughter would be too general, even for a Roman.

Why should it be supposed that the single province of Bithynia was more thoroughly evangelized than other provinces more easily accessible and upon which the apostles bestowed more abundant labor?

Consider the province of Asia. John writes the Revelation to the seven churches in this one province. There were bodies of Christians in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. In addition to these groups, Paul writes to the church in Colossæ. And then Philip had his residence in Hierapolis. Besides, the three letters of John are also written to groups in this same province. We are justified in saying that all Asia was evangelized as thoroughly as all Judæa.

That Bithynia and Asia were no excep-

tions among the provinces, singled out particularly by apostles who were bidden to disciple all of the nations and not some of the nations, may be further inferred from the fact that like the Revelation of John, which was addressed to seven churches in the province of Asia, the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians is written to the churches in the province of Galatia.

We are fully prepared now for the testimony of Tertullian, who said that the Christian believers had so grown in numbers that they formed a considerable proportion even of the armies of the empire of Rome.

Right royally then wrought these apostolic heroes of the Christ. The Word itself bears eloquent testimony to their labors. They are said to have gone forth and preached everywhere. Their full devotion to the supreme enterprise upon which they embarked at the command of Christ is all the better understood when we note the number of the apostles who lie buried in missionary graves.

How many do you suppose of the orig-

inal group of our Lord's twelve apostles lie buried in their native land?

When the dead in Christ shall rise first, from what widely scattered lands of the Old World shall the apostles come?

1. Peter was crucified head downward in the Neroian persecution which also claimed the apostle Paul. Both Paul and Peter met death in Rome, and their dust lies in the land of Italy.

2. Andrew was crucified in Achaia on a cross which ever afterward has borne his name.

3. James was the first among the twelve to suffer martyrdom. He was beheaded by Herod the king in Jerusalem in Judæa.

4. John had his sepulcher in the city of Ephesus in Asia.

5. Philip met a violent death in Hierapolis in Asia.

6. Nathanael Bartholomew was crucified in Armenia.

7. Thomas was martyred in India.

8. Matthew likewise met his death in India.

9. James the son of Alphæus met death in a foreign land.

10. Thaddæus went from Africa to be forever with his Lord.

11. Simon the Cananæan passed to his reward from the land of Egypt.

12. Judas Iscariot was buried in the land of Judæa.

Eleven of the twelve were Galilæans.

The solitary apostle who was not a Galilæan was the man from Judæa.

It is very interesting to note that only one of the apostles was buried in his native land.

The sepulchres of the apostles are all the way from India to Italy, and from Armenia to Egypt. The apostles lie in missionary graves on the three continents of Europe, Africa, and Asia. The earthly resting places of these intrepid souls are in Italy, Achaia, Asia, Armenia, India, Egypt, and other foreign lands.

Judas Iscariot was a Judæan. And Judas Iscariot alone of all the twelve apostles lies buried in his native land.

Then every apostle except one gave his life to the missionary enterprise. "Judas Iscariot who also betrayed him" was the only one among the twelve apostles who

did not become a missionary. And so the only one among the twelve apostles who did not become a missionary became a traitor.

You do not believe in missions, did you say? Well, neither did Judas Iscariot. And it surely ought not to be a matter of much pride for anyone to find that his views of the missionary enterprise were first shared by the one man among the twelve who betrayed his Master with a traitor's kiss.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ATTRIBUTE OF EVERLAST-
ING AS APPLIED TO BOOKS

THE four Gospels form the most priceless literary treasure in all the world. To the end of the ages these four writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John will be unrivaled, for theirs is the life story of the Altogether Lovely One, the Fairest among ten thousand, the Bright and the Morning Star. There were others who wrote out the wonderful story of the life of Jesus besides these four. But only the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have outlived the long centuries, and are destined still to outlive all the centuries.

The author of the first named among the Gospels is Matthew; and Matthew was a publican. It is eminently fitting that the Gospel which was written by a publican should portray in captivating grandeur the kingliness of Christ. As tax collector for the Romans the man Matthew had grown familiar with the earthly roy-

alty of his day. He knew how empty of all reality were those semblances of power. And on the day that the real King passed by and saw him sitting at the seat of custom, Matthew recognized the Lord of Glory, the King of kings, the Desire of all nations, the Prince of Peace. So Matthew's Gospel portrays the kingliness of Christ in such fine fashion as to most beautifully fulfill the expectations of his race. And Matthew's Gospel is written primarily to the Jews. Its truths are universal, yet its materials are assembled in a manner to carry conviction to the members of that race among whom the Master himself was born, and whose hopes he came to fulfill.

Matthew wrote a Gospel in Aramaic. Hebrew was the language of Holy Writ, and the official language of the synagogues. However, during the days of the Babylonian captivity, the Jews acquired Aramaic, and upon their return to the promised land Aramaic became the language of the common people. The Jewish translations of the Old Testament writings and other religious literature of the times of

the apostles were almost altogether written in Aramaic. It is most interesting that Matthew is known to have written a Gospel in Aramaic, the language not only of the Jews in Palestine but also the language which was spoken by the Jews in the other lands to which they had gone. A Gospel, then, that should make its strongest appeal to the people for whom it was intended would most naturally be written in the language which they would most easily understand, and the language which would be used by them in their other religious writings. It is very probable that Matthew hoped to win to Jesus that large body of his fellow countrymen scattered abroad whose expectations of the coming kingly Messiah would be fully realized in Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.

The first year of our Lord's earthly ministry was spent in an attempt to win the important religious leaders in Jerusalem. And that year is known as the year of obscurity in our Lord's life. It was a year of intense activity; but at its close there were no justifying results. And

Jesus turned to the fishermen and the publicans, from which groups the disciples were so largely drawn. And just so the Gospel of Matthew, written in Aramaic expressly to reach the religious leaders among his own people, fell so far short of accomplishing what Matthew had in mind that it has now been completely lost to the knowledge of men.

Matthew also wrote his Gospel in Greek. To that fact we probably owe the preservation of this Gospel. But why did Matthew write at all in Greek? There is only one sufficient answer. The ever-widening campaign to carry the glad tidings to all nations made it imperative that his Gospel should also be written in the one language which carried farthest in that missionary day.

The author of the Gospel of Mark enjoyed a unique privilege. In his Christian service he had intimate acquaintance with three of the wonder men in the early church: Peter, Barnabas, and Paul. John Mark accompanied Barnabas and Saul on the first missionary journey; and, in company with Barnabas, made a later visit

to the earlier mission fields. Following these evangelizing journeys with his uncle, Mark joined Peter in extensive tours to many mission lands. Later still Mark once again comes into fellowship and service with the great apostle to the Gentiles; for, in his pastoral epistles, Paul refers to the value of John Mark to him in the ministry.

Mark's Gospel was evidently intended for Gentile readers. This is clearly seen from the fact that Hebrew or Aramaic names and expressions are explained. Then the Old Testament is only once quoted by the evangelist in his own narrative, while the law is not even mentioned. In reducing money to the Roman equivalent, in speaking of Pilate as though the first readers would know who was meant, and in the frequent use of Latin words, it is concluded that the Gospel of Mark was written in Rome. This picturesque story of the life and labors of the eternal Son of God was originally intended for a Roman community of Gentile believers.

The Gospel of Luke pictures in an

unusual degree the Gospel of a gratuitous and universal salvation. In the Gospel of Luke love embraces all mankind. Throughout the Gospel Christ's compassion for the poor is exhibited in a remarkable degree. The Saviour himself is born among the lowly; his parents offer for him the sacrifice for the poor. In later life he had not where to lay his head. And the Gospel of Luke is the Gospel of a wonderful salvation—a salvation that can save unto the uttermost, and that reaches even to the thief upon the cross. Luke's Gospel portrays the Son of man as the Saviour and the Friend of all. This is the Gospel of the publican, and of the outcast, and of the weeping Magdalene, and of the crucified malefactors, and of the good Samaritan, and of the prodigal son. It is the inclusive Gospel for all the world.

Luke's Gospel was written for Gentiles. The author himself was a Gentile, and the Gospel is addressed to a Gentile, Theophilus by name.

John's Gospel was written outside the homeland of Palestine. This is seen in

the author's unique way of referring to the Jews. His frequent references to the Jewish land and customs can be fully understood alone in the viewpoint of the Gospel having been written from a foreign land. And John's Gospel was written primarily for the converts of the foreign missionaries. It was intended at the first for Gentile readers, as may be inferred from the many subtle suggestions and explanations of manners and customs throughout the book which make the message all the clearer to non-Jewish readers.

In scarcely no other way can the world's great debt to the foreign missionary enterprise be so clearly realized as in the single matter of the writing of the very Gospels themselves.

The Gospel of Matthew was written for the members of his own race, dispersed among the nations.

The Gospel of Mark was written to perpetuate the story of redeeming love as it had been proclaimed by Peter in his foreign missionary labors.

The Gospel of Luke was written to

confirm the faith of a Gentile convert who had been won by the missionaries in a foreign land.

The Gospel of John was written to sustain the Christian confidence of those who had been lately won to faith in Jesus through the work of missionaries.

Therefore, if it had not been for the missionary enterprise, the Gospels as we now know them would never have been written at all. This is a self-evident truth.

Only a foreign missionary could write an everlasting Gospel. If proof is sought for this self-evident proposition, the proof may be found in the fact that only foreign missionaries *did* write everlasting Gospels.

A great many people attempted to write Gospels. But no other than Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote Gospels which the world would not allow to die. Broken fragments of the other Gospels are found now and again. These mostly are unrelated sayings of Jesus. And although several hundred such shattered bits have been recovered so far, yet not one of these broken bits adds aught of value to the Gospel story.

An everlasting Gospel could not be written in the environment of Jerusalem. For if the missionaries in the early church had waited until they received the full approval of the church in Jerusalem, the gospel would never have been preached to the Gentiles. So they who did not love their Lord enough to obey his last command, did not know him well enough to write his love message for the world. Wherefore, only foreign missionaries could write an everlasting gospel, because only foreign missionaries did.

CHAPTER XVII

THE HIGHEST EXPRESSION OF
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

"You will see by the morning paper what the people in China think of the foreign missionaries!" were the words with which he greeted me that morning in the Pullman.

I had not seen the morning paper, for I like to read something better first in the morning; and yet I knew that in all probability there had been a disturbance of some kind. Perhaps a bit of mob violence had been visited upon some mission station. And so I answered,

"Strange as it may seem, that is the way the missionaries are usually treated in all lands where they first go to preach the gospel. It is the way they were treated when they first landed on the shores of the continent in which they finally reached and evangelized our own forefathers."

At the mention of our own forefathers the traveler said, with quick eagerness:

"What is your authority for that, sir?"

"The story is told in a very old book," I answered; "a very old book that is not read very much any more."

"Where can I get a copy of that book?" the man replied, with apparent interest.

"I am not quite sure," I said; "for it is a very old book."

"Do you suppose I could get a copy of it at the news stand?" the man inquired.

"I think not," I said; "for I never saw a copy of that old book at any news stand."

"Could I get a copy in a bookstore?" the man persisted.

"I doubt it," I said; "for it is a rather rare book, very old, and not read very much any more."

"Have you ever read a copy of it?" the man asked.

"Yes, I have."

"Would you mind telling me about it?" he asked.

And as I told him the story of the experiences which befell Paul at Philippi, it was an interesting study to note the transformation which was wrought in the

man's face, as for the first time apparently he associated the apostolic missionary enterprise with the evangelization of the continent on which our own forefathers lived.

As I finished the old, old story of Paul in Philippi, the man asked: "Are you a foreign missionary?"

"Yes," I said; "that is the deepest joy in my life, next to the joy I have in my Saviour."

"To what people did you go as a missionary?" he inquired, in what appeared to me to be a real spirit of earnest inquiry.

"I went as a missionary to the Pam-pangans," I replied.

"Did they ask you to come?" he asked, in that same spirit of seeming earnestness.

"No," I said; "they did not ask me to come."

"Then why did you go?" he demanded, sharply, in utter contrast to the mild manner he had assumed but a brief instant before.

For the moment I was quite startled at his sudden change of manner, and at the self-confident mood which he now

manifested. However, in answer to his startling question I told this incident which happened in my college days.

"I was on my way to my room one wintry night, when, as I passed in front of the college president's home, my attention was attracted to a brilliant light in the rear room of the Morgan home next door. The reflecting flicker of flames upon the window was such as might be occasioned by the fire in an open stove. And yet as I thought about it, if the bright reflection were from the flames of an open stove, there ought to be a part of the room in a deep shadow, and here the entire room appeared to be full of light.

"There was a high wind blowing, and most of the buildings in the college town were frame dwellings, with only the most meager fire protection. Should a fire get under way a stormy night like that, it would mean the loss of most of the town. And so I ran hurriedly across the lawn of the president's home, and then over the Morgan yard, and came directly under the brilliantly lighted window of the room above—and there I was standing right

in front of the dining room window of the Morgan home. It was supper time in that home, and seated about the table, enjoying their evening meal, were the four members of the family—father, mother, son, and daughter. But just as I came to the dining room window flames in the room above caught the lace curtain and sprang instantly to the ceiling. And there, in the dining room below, all unconscious of the fire raging in the room above, sat the family engaged in the beautiful custom of eating their evening meal together. Some bit of good-humored pleasantry had just gone the rounds of the family circle and they broke into a hearty laugh; and not wishing to disturb them, nor caring to interfere with their family customs, and because they did not ask me to tell them that their house was on fire—I walked on home to my room!”

“No, you didn’t!” exclaimed my new-found friend.

“Well, what did I do then?” I asked.

“You yelled ‘Fire!’ as loud as ever you could!” he replied.

“Yes, I yelled ‘Fire!’ and even before

I could reach their front door, the Morgans were all there, eager and ready to help to put out the fire in some other house, little imagining that their own home was on fire.

“And yet they did not ask me to tell them that their house was on fire! However, if I had known their house was on fire, and had not told—and the fact that I had known a house was on fire, and had not told—had ever become known about me, there is no community in America where I afterward would have been allowed to live in peace.

“No, the Pampangans did not ask me to come, but I knew the peril of people who are out of Christ; and I knew what the love of Christ means to the life; and, knowing that, I was bound to go and tell them.”

According to the apostles, the missionary is the highest expression of the Christian life.

There is little wonder that the ancient copyists of the writings of John should have confused a word in his first epistle, for the missionary idea is ever so hard

to understand apparently, and the idea itself is not always welcome, even to the believers. John tells why he is writing his epistle, and his words are very illuminating, "And these things we write that our joy may be made full." And the word "our" was so little understood that the copyists frequently render it "your." So far short of the higher knowledge of the Christian life do we mostly come that we have lost the fullness of meaning in the finding of our joy in the other's good. That fullness of joy is known in exquisite delight to the missionary alone.

That the apostles regard the missionary as the highest expression of the Christian life is seen in their universal practice. In actual experience each one of them became a missionary himself. And the only one among the twelve apostles who did not become a missionary became a traitor.

In naming the gifts which God had bestowed upon men Paul always names the calling to be a missionary first of all. As though the fact of a man being a missionary is the one privilege above

all others. "And He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, to be evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."

Paul looked upon the missionary as the highest expression of the Christian life. We listen eagerly to the words Paul speaks, and we hear him say, "I am debtor to the Greek!"

"Yes, Paul; we understand how greatly indebted you are to the Greek."

Surprised beyond measure at our interruption, the great missionary hastens to say, "You greatly overestimate my debt to the Greek; for the Greek is far more in debt to me than I am in debt to him."

And then, as though not noting our interruption, the mighty missionary continues, "I am debtor to the barbarian!"

"Why, Paul!" we exclaim; "you in debt to the barbarian! What did a barbarian ever do for you?"

"You do not understand," our great missionary replies; "I am in debt to the barbarian, not because of anything the barbarian ever has done for me, but I

am in debt to the barbarian because of what I can do for him!"

That is the highest expression of the Christian life.

That is the Golden Rule in action.

O, Paul, I am so glad that you realized that you were in debt to the barbarian! I am so glad that you paid in full that debt of yours to the barbarian! I am so glad for all that you did for the barbarian, for in those days my ancestors were all among the barbarians!

How far short we all come of the glory of God as it is seen in the face of Jesus Christ! Only the missionary who followed his Master into the missionary enterprise was able to say, "Follow me, as I follow Christ!"

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PROPOSITION AS IT
NOW STANDS

HERE, then, is the obligation which each succeeding generation is under to the foreign missionary enterprise: If it had not been for the foreign missionary enterprise, the world would never have had the Bible at all.

1. Every book in the New Testament was written by a foreign missionary.

2. Every epistle in the New Testament that was written to a church was written to a foreign missionary church.

3. Every letter in the New Testament that was written to an individual was written to the convert of a foreign missionary.

4. Every book in the New Testament that was written to a community of believers was written to a general group of foreign missionary churches.

5. The one book of prophecy in the New Testament was written to the seven foreign missionary churches in Asia.

6. The only authoritative history of the early Christian Church is merely a foreign missionary journal.

7. The disciples were called Christians first in a foreign missionary community.

8. The language of the books of the New Testament is the missionary's language.

9. The map of the early Christian world is the tracings of the missionary journeys of the apostles.

10. The problems which arose in the early church were largely questions of missionary procedure.

11. Of the twelve apostles chosen by Jesus, every apostle except one became a missionary.

12. The only man among the twelve apostles who did not become a missionary became the traitor.

13. Only a foreign missionary could write an everlasting Gospel.

14. According to the apostles, the missionary is the highest expression of the Christian life.

Therefore, if it had not been for the missionary enterprise, the world would never have had the Bible at all.

This study, however, is related only to the New Testament. Would not the world have had that portion of the Holy Scriptures which we know as the Old Testament, even if there had never been a New Testament?

The world has the Old Testament at the present time, because of the New Testament. For they who have always been in possession of the Old Testament alone have never given it to the world, and never would.

The New Testament books are pre-eminently the Christian Scriptures. And for every "jot and tittle" of the Christian Scriptures the world is in debt entirely to the foreign missionary enterprise.

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